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# Assertion training for professional women : a case study.

Ann G. Thomas

*University of Massachusetts Amherst*

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ASSERTION TRAINING FOR PROFESSIONAL WOMEN  
A CASE STUDY

A Dissertation Presented

by

Ann Grace Thomas

Submitted to the Graduate School  
of the University of Massachusetts  
in partial fulfillment of the requirements  
for the degree of

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

June 1976

Major Subject: Organizational Development

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ASSERTION TRAINING FOR PROFESSIONAL WOMEN

A CASE STUDY

A Dissertation

By

Ann Grace Thomas

Approved as to style and content by:

*Kenneth H. Blanchard*

Dr. Kenneth Blanchard, Chairperson

*Judith Evans*

Dr. Judith Evans, Committee Member

*Alexandra Kaplan*

Dr. Alexandra Kaplan, Committee Member

*Grace J. Craig*

Dr. Grace J. Craig, Acting Dean  
School of Education

June 1976

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And finally, I would like to thank a young seventeen year old woman, Nancy Robinson, who has been teaching me for seventeen years what being an assertive woman really means.

DISSERTATION ABSTRACT

Assertion Training for Professional Women

A Case Study (June, 1976)

Ann Grace Thomas, B.A., Western Reserve University

M.S., Southern Connecticut State College

C.A.S., Springfield College

Directed By: Dr. Kenneth H. Blanchard

The purpose of this study was to present a case study which would describe the implementation and evaluation of an assertion training program for professional women. The investigator's intent was to document the training process in order to collect data regarding the areas of applicability of assertion training for professional women; the factors which support and block women's assertive behavior within an organizational setting; the specific assertive behaviors which professional women view as appropriate and the helpful elements of a training program for women.

The women in this study were all functioning on a managerial level within human service agencies. The training occurred weekly over an eight week period for two and a half hours per session.

A variety of measures were used to collect data. Individual interviews were held prior to and at the conclusion of the training. Observation was done by participants through post-session evaluation, participant feedback checklists and on-going journals. Observation by recorders included elements of the method and content of the communication. Observation by the trainer included systematic recording of each training session.

Results, as reported by participants and observed by the trainer and recorders included the following. Professional women frequently function reactively rather than proactively; are relationship oriented; value their own and other's self-worth; are frequently fearful of failing or hurting others; and are highly motivated to change.

Positive reactions or modeling from others was most supportive of change toward more assertiveness. Blocking of assertiveness was more frequently from males and most frequently in the form of manipulation or passive-aggressive behavior with direct anger and aggression a secondary blocking response.

It was found that insight and understanding of emotions and motivation needed to occur simultaneously with behavioral practice for change to occur. Role playing with modeling and feedback was the most effective technique for behavior change.

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Go, Daughter, be bold-  
Go, Daughter, be bold, and  
Climb the mountains up to the sky,  
Race the waves a rolling so high,  
Yell with fury and sometimes cry-  
Your life is yours for the living.

Carolyn McDade

## C H A P T E R I

### INTRODUCTION

The great economic success and world-dominance of the U.S. is a 200 year history of unremunerated...labor of women, slaves and the working class here and in underdeveloped countries! (Reid, 1974, p. 9)

Or maybe the purpose of being here, wherever we are, is to increase the durability and the occasions of love among and between peoples. Love, as the concentration of tender caring and tender excitement, or love as the reasons for job. I believe that love is the single, true prosperity of any moment and that whatever and whoever impedes, diminishes, ridicules, opposes the development of loving spirit is 'wrong'/hateful (Jordan, 1971, p. 51).

This study will address the issues involved for women in assuming leadership within an organizational structure. Specifically, the relationship between assertion training and effective leadership behaviors will be considered. The possible helpfulness to women of assertion training will be discussed in terms of the sex-role conditioning which women have received, the present reality of organizational structuring and the goals and values which women hold relative to interpersonal functioning.

A rigid division between the sexes has occurred traditionally within this culture. Appropriate male conditioning enculturates competitiveness, aggressiveness, independence and rationality while appropriate female conditioning encompasses cooperativeness, passivity, dependency and emotionality (Chafetz, 1974; Epstein, 1971). This polarization of human traits has been assigned a

value hierarchy, e.g., male sex role attributes are considered "better" than female sex role attributes (Bem and Bem, 1970; Broverman, et.al., 1970). Consequently, appropriate work has been divided along lines which coincide with the sex-role conditioned traits, i.e., female jobs were limited to nurturing and/or secondary roles such as raising children or assisting males in doing their work while male appropriate jobs involved more aggressive and pro-active aspects within the work world. The extreme of this conditioning has meant that employment and home are sharply divided and that men go out and work in the business world while women stay home and take care of the family.

This traditionally "male" business world has been built around organizations. Within this century, organizations have grown and maintained themselves through utilizing a "bureaucratic model" (Bennis, 1966) for their organizational structure which includes, according to Bennis, a rigid division of labor, a well-defined hierarchy of authority, a system of procedures for dealing with work situations, and an impersonality of communications within the organization. Power for decision making and implementation of organizational policies and procedures has been delegated, within the structure of authority, to those persons at the upper end of the hierarchy, i.e., managers. The managerial model has been developed from male stereotypic behaviors, i.e., aggressiveness, competition and denial of emotionality (McGregor, 1967; Wells, 1973; Schwartz and Rago, 1973).

While this organizational model may have succeeded in terms of production of "goods", it has been unsuccessful in human terms (Argyris, 1968). This negative effect of the male stereotyped organizational model began to receive attention with the work of Elton Mayo (Roethlisberger and Dickson, 1939) at Western Electric Company. Mayo's research pointed to the significance of the human group and affiliation as a primary need of organizational members. Organizational development (OD) as a separate professional field, has focused on attempting to understand the human side of enterprise (McGregor, 1967) and to develop methods of intervening in organizational structures to produce more humanizing work environments (Hersey and Blanchard, 1969; Schein and Bennis, 1965; Schmuck and Runkel, 1970).

The rationale for organizational intervention is presented in the following definitions of organizational development.

According to Beckhard (1969), OD is:

...a planned, organization-wide effort, managed from the top, to increase organization effectiveness and health through planned interventions in the organization's processes using behavioral science knowledge (p. 9).

Sherwood (1971) defines OD as:

...an educational process by which human resources are continuously identified, allocated and expanded in ways that make those resources more available to the organization and therefore improve the organization's problem solving capabilities (p. 1).



Thus the most commonly accepted goal of organizational intervention within the field of OD is to change the internal processes of the organization in order to allow the organization to function more effectively. Recently, however, there has been the suggestion that this definition represents too constricted a view of change. To be changed, the organizations need to be understood, not as dehumanizing processes within a fair and equitable system but as a "culturally male" structure which cannot incorporate the potential for healthy wholeness (Firestone, 1970; Millett, 1971; Hartsock, 1974; Reid, 1974).

Concurrent with this attention to organizational failure in human terms have been significant changes in the level of awareness of women's position within this culture. The rise of feminism during the 1970's has seen an increasing awareness and analysis regarding both the nature and effects of sex-role conditioning (Rossi, 1972; Weisstein, 1970; Mainardi, 1970). Partially as a consequence of this challenge to sex-role conditioning, change is also occurring for women in the understanding of "appropriate" work. One aspect of this later concern is the attention being paid to upward mobility for women. Increasingly, the limiting of women to entry level and support system jobs is being identified as an example of cultural sexism. Both legal and professional energy is being focused on placing competent women in professional/managerial level jobs. While

the process of system change vis a vis personnel/affirmative action is still occurring slowly and erratically (Loring and Wells, 1972), many women are managing to overcome traditional organizational barriers and are moving into professional levels which are both new to them and to the organization.

The nature of this challenge for the women involved as well as for the organization becomes a whole, relatively recent area of important inquiry. Out of a history of sexism, what barriers exist for women within organizational structures? Do these developments within organizations constitute simply another internal change which, as Hartsock (1974) suggests may co-opt women into playing male roles within a male structure? Or does the incorporation of women into the work world in positions of power have the potential of effecting basic or first order change? What skills and attributes do women bring which may be helpful in humanizing organizations, thereby rendering them more effective, and what skills do they lack which may be necessary for their survival in an environment hostile to their conditioning? These and other questions are just beginning to be formulated in considering the impact of women within the traditionally defined male-work world.



### THE PROBLEM

The role of women within organizations as evidenced through what behaviors they are conditioned to know and what behaviors are organizationally rewarded, punished or allowed, is beginning to receive attention in the literature (Loring and Wells, 1972; Bunker and Seashore, 1976; Kanter, 1976). Simultaneously, methods are being proposed to change organizational attitudes and resistances on the one hand, and, on the other, to change and/or increase women's skills at being able to handle both professional/managerial expectations and negative reactions to their effective functioning.

One of the methods being proposed to help women function more effectively which is currently receiving much attention is assertion training for women. Assertive behavior is defined by Wolpe (1973) as "...the proper expression of any emotion other than anxiety towards another person. (p. 81)". The literature focuses heavily on assertion as a behavioral technique useful either in helping to decondition anxiety response habits of individuals who behaviorally express this emotion through withdrawal (Wolpe, 1958, 1973) or as a teaching technique to help individuals learn previously unknown behaviors (Eisler and Hersen, 1973).

While some writers (Alberti and Emmons, 1970; Phelps and Austin, 1975) suggest that assertion training is particularly

relevant as a method to overcome the negative sex-role conditioning which women have experienced, a number of questions have not yet been raised within the literature. These include: where, within a professional setting, do women experience the need for additional skills which might be designated as increased assertiveness?; what behaviors do women see as assertive behaviors?; what do women experience as the benefits and the liabilities of behaving in an assertive manner? Once women have identified a need for developing or increasing skills in assertiveness, what supports and/or blocks this change? What are the elements of effective assertive training for women?

With these questions unexplored within the literature, there is an urgent need to begin to collect information which will contribute to the body of knowledge regarding women's functioning within organizations. Additionally, there is a need to provide information about assertive behavior for women which reflects women's experiences within organizations rather than the male organizational/managerial model. Therefore, this study was constructed to solicit women's views of their experiences with assertion training and their subsequent assertive behaviors in as open a manner as possible (i.e., a case study).

#### PURPOSE OF THIS STUDY

The purpose of this study is to describe the implementation and evaluation of an assertion training program for professional

women in order to provide information regarding:

1. What types of situations professional women experience where they identify a need to be more assertive.
2. What factors support and block assertive behavior for professional women.
3. What values and goals women hold regarding the appropriateness of various behaviors within a professional setting.
4. In what ways this training model was helpful and where it needs refinement.

This study hopes to establish that this type of training can provide women with increased skills and additional behavioral options. It hopes to demonstrate that training can increase women's feelings of confidence in assuming previously sex-role prohibited behaviors and roles organizationally, as well as increase their confidence in meeting the conflict which it is assumed will result from not exhibiting the female role-specified behaviors. Finally, it will identify additional questions which professional women are facing in attempting to function professionally within a stereotypic male structure as a basis for future research.

#### DESIGN OF THIS STUDY

A group, composed of ten women functioning professionally within human service agencies, received eight weeks of assertion training. The actual training time covered two and a half hours per week for a total of twenty hours of training.

There were four criteria for admission into the training.

1. Participants had to be adult females.
2. Participants had to be functioning on a professional level within an organization: i.e., holding a job whose job description placed that job above a menial or support system level.
3. Participants had to be working within a human service rather than a profit oriented organization in order to provide a more homogeneous group.
4. Participants had to be self-defined as needing more assertive skills professionally.

There is support within the literature to suggest that Ss who are self-defined as non-assertive are similar to a clinical population of self-referred non-assertive Ss (McFall and Marston, 1970).

The training program was advertised through a one-page information sheet which was circulated to human service agencies within commuting distance of the training site. Several precautions were taken to make it unobtrusive so non-assertive Ss could volunteer: the written information included both the Trainer's phone number and the names of several contact people who might be known to agency staff; Ss who expressed interest were not required to commit themselves immediately; and interested Ss could either phone the Training Site or contact a person known to them in order to register.

The eight weeks of training were designed to cover the following areas:



1. Individual analysis/diagnosis of factors within transactions which trigger non-assertive behaviors.
2. Pre-reading material on sex-role conditioning and assertion.
3. Skill development on identifying appropriate assertive behaviors.
4. Skill development on initiating in an assertive manner: i.e., making the first statement within a transaction.
5. Skill development on responding in an assertive manner: i.e., making the second statement within a transaction.

Prior to the training each woman was individually interviewed in order to determine her perception of the following:

1. What models and supports exist for her professional functioning?
2. Which behaviors were either available or not available to her?
3. What types of situations elicit assertive and non-assertive behaviors from her?
4. What were her change goals?

During the eight weeks of training the following occurred:

1. Each women kept a journal which focused on her descriptions of the following events:
  - a. situations in which she was assertive, including what led up to the behavior and what followed the behavior.
  - b. situations in which she wanted to be assertive but was not, including what led up to the incident and what followed.
  - c. reactions from others in her environment to her use of assertive behaviors.

- d. behaviors or factors which she experienced as supportive and/or blocking of her assertive behaviors.
2. Each woman evaluated the training session at the conclusion of each session on a written form.
3. An observer attended each session and recorded participant behavior during the session according to a list of non-verbal behaviors which may indicate non-assertiveness.
4. The trainer kept a systematic recording of each training session.

At the conclusion of the eight weeks of training, each woman was interviewed individually in order to determine her perception of both the process and any behavioral changes.

In summary, the purpose of this study is to describe an assertion training program for professional women in order to report on the areas of need which professional women experience for assertion skills as well as what supports and blocks the process of behavioral change for professional women. The method chosen as most appropriate for this type of research was the case study since this method is designed to utilize, as fully as possible, the advantages of seeing a situation as a whole, and to best illuminate fundamental relationships and to observe the process of growth or change. In order for this advantage to accrue, a case study must include: data from several phases of the intervention; a description of the process and conceptualizations about that process, e.g., interactions, critical incidents, and their effect on subsequent actions (Walton, 1972).

The data gathering techniques chosen within this case study to meet that requirement included interviewing, self-reporting, training evaluation and observation. The data collection procedures are described in Chapter III. A description of the training material and the data gathered is presented in Chapter IV. Chapter V presents an analysis of the data.

#### DEFINITION OF TERMS

In order to clarify pertinent terms used within this study, the following definitions are presented.

assertion: a method of communicating involving both the verbal and non-verbal which directly states the communicant's position without utilizing either anxiety/withdrawal or anger/aggression.

training: an organized learning technique based on a balanced plan of conceptual understanding, behavioral practice and behavioral feedback.

input: presentation of conceptual material by the trainer within the training session.

experience: any behavioral practice within the training session.

process: feedback and analysis of experience.

cop-out: a method of communicating structured to avoid directness in stating what is wanted.

trap: a method of communicating designed to indirectly limit another person within a verbal transaction.

inner space: the internal thoughts and emotions of an individual.

#### LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

1. The time duration of this study was limited to an eight week period. The study, therefore, does not report on either the stability of any reported changes or the long-term organizational reactions to any change.
2. This study describes only one assertion training program with one group of women. The generalizability of the data will depend on similarities with other groups.
3. By utilizing the case study method, this study provides descriptive data of a process of change within the confines described above. It is not intended to provide experimental data.
4. This study was designed to describe the process of change within professional women's behavior within one training



model and was not designed to provide more than a direction for further study vis a vis organizational change.

#### ORGANIZATION OF THE REMAINDER OF THE STUDY

Within Chapter II, a review of the related literature is presented. Chapter III contains a description of the research methodology and data collection. Chapter IV is a presentation of the results of the training. Chapter V presents a discussion of the data collected and a summary of this study.

## CHAPTER II

### REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

There has been a proliferation of articles and books written in the past decade on the subject of women. This literature review attempts to confine itself to those writings which relate to the ability of women to function within organizational structures in effective leadership/management roles once they are within those jobs. The reality of female competence is assumed. It has been well documented that professional women either resemble or surpass their male counterparts in intelligence, commitment to jobs, seriousness of purpose and insightfulness (Bachtold and Werner, 1971; O'Leary and Braun, 1972; Tangri, 1969). It is also documented that fewer women occupy managerial level positions within organizations than men (Loring and Wells, 1972; Koontz, 1971; Herman, 1974), and that this group of women frequently report difficulty in carrying out their roles (Herman, 1974; Woods, 1975; Bunker and Seashore, 1976). This review, therefore, focuses on what is stated within the literature regarding the barriers for women's professional functioning as well as what literature exists about utilizing assertion training as a method of responding to the identified barriers for women.

Specifically, two questions are asked about women within organizations. What factors do women encounter which are external to them which may block effective professional functioning? What have women internalized as a result of their conditioning which

may block their effective professional functioning? Although at times this dicotomy is arbitrary, the external and internal dynamics will be dealt with as distinct for purposes of clarity. The literature relating to a third group of questions regarding assertion training will also be explored within this chapter.

## I. EXTERNAL BARRIERS

Four factors emerged within the literature as possible external barriers to effective managerial functioning for women. These are: the male nature of the organizational and managerial model, the "double message" presented through organizational dehumanizing, the continued presentation by colleagues of the traditional sex role, and the prevalence of myths and prejudicial attitudes regarding women's ability to function in organizational leadership.

### The male nature of the organizational and managerial model.

O'Leary (1974), McGregor (1960), Bowman (1964) and Loring and Wells (1972) identify that both organizational structures and the model for appropriate organizational leadership have traditionally focused on characteristics such as competitiveness and aggression, i.e., stereotypic behaviors considered appropriate to the male sex role. According to Loring and Wells (1972) "The standard is male; women are compared against that standard (p. 92)". McGregor (1967) states:

The model of the successful manager in our culture is a masculine one. The good manager is aggressive, competitive, firm and just. He is not feminine...(p. 23).

The "double message" presented through organizational dehumanizing. Simultaneously, however, the literature points to the ineffectiveness of this bipolarized model. Hersey and Blanchard (1969) identify the need on the managerial level for human skills. Argyris (1968) states:

All organizations begin with a formal structure designed to achieve their core activities. To date, all the structures designed have been inadequate in their ability to capitalize on human potentialities (p. 344).

The study of organizational development (O.D.) has materialized in response to the inadequacies of organizational structures to meet human needs. The focus of much of the current O.D. analysis of organizational structures centers, in part, on management philosophies which influence the nature of human interaction and organizational climate. The consistent value statement within this literature is that organizations need to move in the direction of trust, collaboration and acknowledgment of total personhood, including the validity of emotions (Likert, 1967; McGregor, 1960; Beckhard, 1969; Schmuck and Runkel, 1970; Lippitt, 1969). McGregor (1966) summarizes the value position of these organizational development specialists when he states:

The findings which are beginning to emerge from the social sciences challenge this whole set of beliefs about man and human nature (man is indolent, self-centered, gullible, lacks ambition and needs control) and about the task of management...he (the social scientist) is pretty sure that

this behavior is not a consequence of man's inherent nature. It is a consequence rather of the nature of industrial organizations, of management philosophy, policy, and practice (p. 7).

Thus, women moving into managerial positions within organizations are presented with a "double message" regarding effective functioning. On the one hand they face an external pressure to conform to a male model of managerial functioning within a male organizational structure which values aggressiveness, competitiveness and toughness. Simultaneously, however, they are confronted with the obvious breakdown in organizational effectiveness of this dehumanized approach. Janeway (1974) presents the bind from this "double message" when she talks of reading an HEW report which makes recommendations to industry on how to deal with worker alienation:

...it's fascinating to note that making work more bearable simply means reintroducing old human patterns-patterns with which women are familiar, even if men have forgotten them and pushed them aside...I read it [the report] with great interest, and as I did, I kept thinking-but we know this! It's what women have been doing for themselves...it's nothing but ordinary common sense, to try and get human dimensions and satisfactions into work-how funny that it's such a big deal! (pp. 144-145).

The presentation by colleagues of the traditional sex roles.

Women are also met with sex role stereotypes regarding appropriate behavior. The literature (Bardwick and Douvan, 1971; Silverman, 1971; Chafetz, 1974) describes the female sex role stereotype in part as being characterized by dependence, passivity, cooperativeness, reactiveness, inward orientation, subjectivity, emotionality,



sensitivity, nurturance, inability to risk. The characteristics within the approved feminine image have been both clearly defined and consensually endorsed by both males and females within this culture (Fernberger, 1948; McKee and Sherriffs, 1959; Seward, 1946; Sherriffs and McKee, 1957; Steinman and Fox, 1966). It has only been since the late sixties that any substantiative disagreement with the appropriateness of these role associations and sex role stereotyping has begun to appear (Janeway, 1971; Maccoby and Jacklin, 1974; Morgan, 1970; Angrist, 1972). Prather (1971) found that there are two prevailing images of women within our culture; that of sexual object and that of servant. She further identifies that women's job descriptions frequently reflect those two sex role stereotypes. Kanter (1976) found that women are responded to, in groups and organizations, according to roles which coincide with the sex role stereotype (i.e., mother, sex object, pet, iron maiden). Schwartz and Rago (1973) point out the same dynamic of women within organizations being related to as roles. In their view, males are invested in continuing this pattern either because of lack of experience in alternative ways of functioning or because of deprivation within their own conditioning which creates needs they demand women continue to fulfill. Janeway (1974) shares a similar view of the need which males have to keep women within roles.

For if women are simply people, no better and no worse than men, where are men's dreams to roost? Who will forgive them for their trespasses? Who will accept the sins they cannot accept themselves? (p. 207).

Both Wells (1973) and Pierce and Sanfacon (1974) identify that the process of placing women into traditional sex roles within a professional relationship may occur on either an overt or covert level.

Thus the literature indicates that while professional women are expected to assume male characteristics of objectivity, aggressiveness and outward orientation, they are frequently responded to within the traditional roles of sex object, mother or pet (e.g., daughter, little sister, cute little thing). Each of these roles is "less than" male/human functioning (Broverman, et.al., 1970), and represents a continuation of the traditional view of women as less powerful "others".

Prevalence of myths and prejudicial attitudes regarding women's ability to function professionally. Along with stereotypes, women encounter myths and attitudes regarding their professional abilities which function as external barriers to effective organizational functioning (Bowman, Wortney and Greyser, 1965; O'Leary, 1974; Loring and Wells, 1972).

Bass, Krusell and Alexander (1971), Katz (1967), Schwartz and Rago (1973) found that male managers in a supervisory position to women with no or minimal peer contact had the least favorable attitude toward women. Negative attitudes regarding the ability of women to function as effectively as men (i.e., women are less able to cope with crisis, women require greater sick leave, women are temperamentally unfit for management) were found to be prevalent among

male managers who were isolated from or had no experience with female peers (Bowman, Wortney and Greyser, 1965; Gilmer, 1961; Loring and Wells, 1972). Other studies (Goldberg, 1968; Bem and Bem, 1970; Pheterson, Kiesler and Goldberg, 1971; Deaux and Taynor, 1973) indicate a belief exists that women are generally less competent than men.

The validity of the myths surrounding women's ability/inability to function professionally, however, has been disproven. A study done by Crowley, Levitin and Quinn (1973) offered no support for the belief that women worked only for "pin money", that women are more concerned with socioemotional aspects of their jobs, that women would not work if economic reasons did not force them to, that women were more content than men with intellectually undemanding jobs, that women were less concerned with getting ahead or that women were less concerned with self-actualizing. In support of this study, the Johnson O'Conner Research Foundation Inc. (Johnson, 1975) has identified twenty-two basic aptitudes for management and has the following findings on their research; there were no sexual differences in fourteen of the twenty-two basic aptitudes; men excel in two aptitudes (i.e., grip and structural visualization) and women excel in the remaining six (i.e., accounting aptitude, ideaphoria, persuasion, silograms, observation and finger dexterity). "Theoretically at least...there ought to be more women than men in management (p. 25)."



## II. INTERNAL BARRIERS

Along with external barriers to women's functioning effectively within organizations, there is discussion within the literature of internal barriers which exist for women. O'Leary (1974) identifies that women have also internalized sex role conditioning which may impede their effective professional functioning. Wells (1973), Schwartz and Rago (1973), and Bunker and Seashore (1976) label this process collusion. This process of internalization is described by others (Allport, 1958; Friere, 1972; Pierce, 1973; Bardwick and Douvan, 1971).

Because of the subtleness of this reaction [to the sex role stereotype], a woman is most often not aware of how this has influenced her behavior; limiting her in many ways that she doesn't understand or perceive and keeping her from fully using her own inner creativity (Pierce, 1973, p. 1).

Pierce (1973) suggests that failure orientation, success avoidance, conflict avoidance, approval needs, competition with other women, manipulation and self-limiting behaviors represent a beginning list of ways in which women may have internalized the sex role conditioning. Three areas of internalization discussed within the literature are presented here: the need for approval/affiliation and its relationship to achievement; the motive to avoid success and the fear of failure.

Approval/affiliation. The stronger approval/affiliation needs of women are discussed extensively within the literature (Pierce, 1973; Bardwick and Douvan, 1971; Hoffman, 1972; Veroff, 1969; Getzel,

1966; Walberg, 1969).

Forced to affirm himself because of the loss of older, more stable sources of esteem, the boy beings, before the age of five, to develop a sense of self and criteria of worth which are relatively independent of others' responses. He turns to achievements in the outer and real world and begins to value himself for real achievements in terms of objective criteria....On the other hand....Girls self-esteem remains dependent upon other people's acceptance and love (Bardwick and Douvan, 1971, p. 53).

What this may mean in terms of women's professional functioning is complex. Allport (1958) suggests that being conditioned within an oppressed group produces simultaneously both deficits in ability to function and skills and attributes more highly developed than those of the non-oppressed group.

Bardwick (1971) deals with the value-loading of her quote above (i.e., "real world...real achievements") in a separate article with the following statement:

Generally, we think of achievements in terms of marketplace; the traditional feminine-role accomplishments are not included. This is not just a cultural value-judgment external to the girl, but is something she internalizes (p. 170).

If it is accurate that females' self-esteem is dependent on acceptance from others, this should impact on what motivates females' behavior. There is an indication that women do not respond in any uniform manner to competition as a cue to achieve (French and Lesser, 1964) nor to appeals to competence and mastery (Alper and Greenberger, 1967; McClelland, et.al., 1953; Veroff, et.al., 1953). However,

women have traditionally been conditioned to compete with each other for male approval, i.e., to compete for affiliation (Chafetz, 1974; Pierce, 1973).

Thus achievement for women appears to be related to affiliation, social skills and interpersonal relations (Battle, 1965, 1966; Stein, 1971; Stein, Pohly and Bueller, 1971). Further, Gordon and Hall (1974) indicate that role conflicts for women, therefore, relate to women's perceptions of what men expect to see in women. Bardwick (1971) supports this view:

If a woman receives, or even anticipates, negative feedback concerning achievement-directed behavior, she may curtail her achievement strivings, particularly if the sources of such feedback are those upon whom she relies for the satisfaction of her affiliative needs (p. 820).

While the literature has dealt extensively with the resulting conflict or ambivalence which can occur for women between working out of the home or remaining family-centered (Komarovsky, 1973; Hall and Gordon, 1973; Nye and Hoffman, 1963; Siegel and Haas, 1963; Hawley, 1971), there is little attention being paid to how this conflict or ambivalence effects the job functioning of professional women. Kanter (1976), Woods (1975), and Wells (1973) state that women who achieve upward mobility within organizations do so by having sponsorship from men in power. This might relate to the findings of Gordon and Hall (1974) that conflicts for women were strongly related to their perceptions of what men expected to see in them. On the other hand, it might relate to women's ability to accurately determine the

reality of power within a male-oriented organization rather than to any affiliation needs.

In a study done in 1963, Sundheim found that the highest motives to achieve and the lowest affiliation needs were found in women within the traditionally male defined field of science. Gordon and Hall (1974) found that women who had predominately male traits (as these are traditionally sex-specified within this culture) reported higher feelings of self worth.

The data above is, at points, confusing and contradictory. Achievement for women is related to interpersonal relations according to some, but interpersonal relations with whom or how is unclear. Women in science have high achievement and low affiliation needs according to Sundheim, yet achievement and affiliation are related according to Bardwick. Additionally, how all of this relates to women's behavior once they are functioning professionally, whether conflicts or ambivalences result for women between possible affiliation needs and the job demands or whether the issue is power, and whether women are operating under an expectation (from self or others) to create or implement a different style of management are all under-discussed issues within the literature. Pierce (1973) makes the following statement but there is no research to substantiate her claim.

There is a difference between the approval that every person needs and thrives on, and the approval women learn to need as a basic support for every action. This particular variety involves a constant checking out



for support before any action can be taken....This syndrome shows up in the business world, where a woman given supervisory responsibilities, will do more checking out with a superior (a man) on every action, than a man would (p. 4).

There is no suggestion within the literature, however, to indicate that high affiliation in any way blocks effective professional functioning. There is support (Hersey and Blanchard, 1969) to indicate that affiliation skills (i.e., relationship behaviors) are one set of skills necessary for effective situational leadership. According to Hersey and Blanchard, the question for the manager is when to utilize these behaviors and when utilizing other behaviors will provide more effective leadership.

Success avoidance. Horner (1972) regards success in traditionally masculine contexts linked, for women, with fear of social rejection and anxiety about femininity. She contends that, if women believe there will be negative results from becoming professionally successful, i.e., their valued self-definition will receive disconfirmation, then women will develop a fear of success. Maccoby (1963) had similar findings and Bardwick (1971) agrees..

I suppose that a 'fear of success' sounds strange, but it is very logical, especially for girls who have not yet established their feminine identity within marriage (p. 179).

Studies done by Bachtold and Werner (1971) and O'Leary and Braun (1972) on personality characteristics of female PhDs, however, failed to reveal any higher level of anxiety than present in more traditionally oriented women. Hawley (1972) found that achieving women reported

that the "significant men in their lives" had a model of femininity similar to the one they were enacting. In other words, they had male support and approval for achieving. Bardwick (1971) suggests that: "In women one must look at the relationship between affiliation and achievement motives...(p. 172. Emphasis mine). The suggestion within the literature is that women will experience anxiety about success only when that success is perceived to threaten their sense of identity. Given that support from significant others exists for success behavior, anxiety may not be present. This is consistent with Horner's premise (1972) that anxiety is aroused when one expects negative consequences from an action and that the anxiety will produce avoidance behavior.

The failure dynamic. The third area of internalization concerns failure. O'Leary (1974) suggests that fear of failure may also be a factor in women's apparent reluctance to aspire to higher level positions. Kagan and Moss (1962) found a significant correlation between fear of failure in childhood and adulthood among female but not male subjects. Pierce (1973) suggests a different approach to the issue when she postulates that women may have a failure orientation:

Women are apt to be failure oriented in the way tasks are undertaken, because of a lack of success experience... a woman does not learn how to accomplish tasks and a cycle of failure develops in the way tasks are approached (p. 2).



Bardwick and Douvan (1971) suggest:

Thus the essence of the problem of role conflict lies in the fact that up until now very few women have succeeded in the traditionally masculine roles, not only because of disparagement and prejudice, but largely because women have not been fundamentally equipped and determined to succeed (p. 55. Emphasis mine).

Bunker and Seashore (1976), in discussing issues involved for women in professional functioning identify the utilization of power as a crucial success/failure variable. It is their contention that legitimate/role power is a necessary management skill and,

...has traditionally been associated with men.... The exercise of legitimate power requires behaviors which may not be well practiced by some women. It requires clear decision making, assertiveness and accountability....Becoming more assertive, expressing her own views first rather than soliciting others', being pro-active rather than re-active, indicating clearly the degree to which she is willing to share power, being decisive, all these behaviors are less a part of the socialization of women than men (MS., p. 4).

It is interesting to note that the discussion of both fear of failure and failure orientation appear to imply that some behaviors or skills have not been learned as a result of sex role conditioning rather than that the conditioning has produced internal conflict or ambivalence as is implied in the fear of success dynamic.

In summary, the literature indicates that women functioning on a managerial level within organizations are faced with external barriers due to sex discrimination. These barriers include the

male organizational/managerial model women function within; the "double message" of effectiveness being related to male sex role appropriate behaviors which appear to be the same behaviors which are creating organizational breakdown; the lingering existence of the traditional sex roles; and the prevalence of negative attitudes and myths regarding women. The literature also substantiates that women as a group have internalized the discrimination. Women have higher needs for affiliation which is identified as only one set of necessary behaviors for effective leadership within organizations. The literature also supports that women may have anxiety about success when their success is in conflict with affiliation and support and that women may fear failure or have a failure orientation due to the fact that they have not learned certain skills.

Finally, there is no indication within the literature that women are failing to function as well as their male counterparts on a managerial level within organizations. What the literature indicates instead is that they are functioning professionally in spite of the barriers which exist.

...you've got to be better than a man or you may not get it...we have to be sharper than the average man in order to progress (Woods, p. 39).

An investigation of training for professional women, therefore, needs to begin raising questions regarding the personal cost to women in succeeding in spite of the existing barriers. The values

implied in organizational development are humanistic values.

Organizations exist for people and the human factors for women must no longer be ignored.

Kanter (1976) makes the following statement:

...while men may need help learning about relationships and emotional expression, women need help learning just the opposite: the experience of power, task orientation, intellectualizing, behaving impersonally and addressing large groups, invulnerability to feedback and other new experiences in interpersonal behavior for many women (MS., p. 3).

Hersey and Blanchard (1969) in developing their theory on situational leadership, identify two separate sets of skills as necessary for effective organizational leadership (i.e., relationship skills and task skills). They state that there are times when effective leadership demands only task skills from a manager, other times only relationship skills and still other times a combination of the two. Those behavior deficits for women cited above by both Kanter and by Bunker and Seashore are the same behaviors which Hersey and Blanchard identify as behaviors appropriate for task leadership. Thus there is an implicit suggestion within the literature that women managers are functioning well with certain skills either absent or not fully developed. This suggestion supports the assumption that there may be a personal price exacted from women who function professionally.

### III. ASSERTION TRAINING

The other body of literature reviewed for this study is the literature on assertion training. This literature was reviewed in order to answer the following questions:

1. How is assertive behavior defined and what specific behaviors are identified as comprising assertiveness?
2. What rationale is presented for training in assertion?
3. How is therapeutic efficacy dealt with within the literature?

Each of these issues is reviewed in terms of what discussion is occurring within the literature regarding the specific needs and characteristics of women and the relationship between this type of training intervention and women's needs.

Definitions. There is little agreement within the literature regarding either a definition of assertive behavior or a delineation of the specific behaviors comprising assertiveness. This lack of specificity as to behaviors is pointed out by McFall and Marston (1970) and Eisler, et.al., (1973). McFall and Lillesand (1971) conclude that

...assertive behavior appears to be a broad, non-functional heterogeneous and situation-specific response class (p. 314).

An example of this broad type of definition can be found in Wolpe's work (1958).

It [assertive behavior] refers not only to more or less aggressive behavior, but also to the outward



expression of friendly, affectionate and other non-anxious feelings (p. 114).

Friedman (1971) defines low assertive behavior

...as the inability of a person to engage in behavior which indicates he has certain rights he feels he is entitled to exercise (p. 151).

Besides the generalized nature of these definitions, what is interesting is that assertive behavior is not clearly differentiated from aggressive behavior. The literature is divided on this issue. Wolpe (1958), Rathus (1972), Bates and Zimmerman (1971), MacPherson (1972) and Edwards (1972), by not differentiating between aggression and assertion and by recommending angry and aggressive behaviors appear to view aggression as one aspect of assertion. As a result, they are conceptualizing human behavior as bipolarized with withdrawn behavior as one polar point and assertion/aggression as the other pole. This bipolarized view duplicates the traditional sex role concepts within this culture with stereotypic and traditionally appropriate female behaviors viewed as reactive and passive and the stereotypic and traditionally appropriate male behaviors viewed as active and aggressive. What should be noted in the writings cited above is that the lack of differentiation between assertion/aggression is predicated on the presence of the emotion anger. Absent, however, is any questioning of value issues involved in how anger is utilized interpersonally. Wolpe (1958) presents this view in the following statement: "...the kind of assertive behavior that is most used in therapy is aggressive (anger-expressing)

behavior... (p. 114)." Lazarus (1971) notes the danger in this approach.

\* { ...the difference between assertion and aggression should be noted, since outbursts of hostility, rage or resentment usually denote pent-up or accumulated anger rather than the spontaneous expression of healthy emotions (p. 115).

Alberti and Emmons (1970) also make a distinction between assertive and aggressive behaviors as follows:

\* { It is not uncommon for assertive behavior to be confused with aggressive behavior. We have, however, observed that assertion does not involve hurting another person (p. 21).

Thus the literature is divided between those who view assertion as an aspect of aggression involving anger and those who view assertion as separate from aggression.

Assertive behaviors. There have been only limited attempts to delineate specific behaviors which comprise assertiveness. Wolpe and Lazarus (1966) identify the method of communication, i.e., style of emotional expression, posture, facial expression and non-verbal speech characteristics as an important component of assertiveness. Serber (1972) has isolated six nonverbal components of assertion training, i.e., loudness of voice, fluency of spoken words, eye contact, facial expression, body expression and distance from person with whom one is interacting.

Eisler, et.al., (1973) identified Ss high in assertiveness as having the following behaviors:



Those who are perceived as being assertive tend to respond to interpersonal problems quickly and in a strongly audible voice with marked intonation... highly assertive individuals do not automatically accede to the demands of others and are more likely to request that the interpersonal partner change his behavior (p. 299).

The literature agrees that one description of assertive behavior involves not automatically acceding to the demands of others.

There are conflicting views, however, regarding how a person resists or refuses. Wolpe (1958) proposed both direct anger, including counter-attack which he calls overt assertiveness, and indirect anger as effective methods. The following illustrates an indirect method which he advocates:

But it is quite frequently possible to express aggression indirectly through gaining control of an interpersonal relationship by means subtler than overt assertiveness. One way of doing this is to play upon the other persons known or presumed sensitivities without seeming to intend to do so (p. 118).

This clearly places manipulation within the realm of assertiveness for Wolpe, implying that assertion means getting what you want.

Phelps and Austin (1975), on the other hand, identify manipulation as a negative, nonassertive way to handle anger.

Persistent assertions are honest and straight forward.... Manipulation is deceptive and the manipulator is acting through indirect means to get someone to do something (p. 95).

In proposing that assertive behaviors are distinct from aggression, Phelps and Austin (1975), Jakowski-Spector (1973), and Alberti and Emmons (1970) begin to raise questions about the nature and effects of sex-role conditioning on women's behavior. Viewing women as one

culturally oppressed group, they identify nonassertion as a symptom of oppression. Therefore, assertive behaviors are distinct from those behaviors necessitated by oppression. Phelps and Austin's view on manipulation serves as an example:

Because women have been denied access to direct means to attain their desired goals, they have had to rely on indirect or manipulative methods as their primary vehicle for power and control (p. 94).

Fodor (1974) also focuses on the value of assertiveness training for women. She sees women evidencing a high incidence of sex role conflict and advocates assertion training as a method to help women express themselves directly, increase their independence and overcome passivity. However, she also recognizes the current confusion over the meaning of assertion: "...the notion of what is healthy assertion needs definition (p. 27)." The literature, therefore, reflects a lack of agreement on the meaning of assertion. There is general agreement that not automatically acceding to the demands of others is assertiveness and that this assertiveness may be communicated verbally and/or non-verbally. Specific behaviors are neither identified in detail nor consensually endorsed.

One group of writers (Alberti and Emmons, 1970; Phelps and Austin, 1975; Jakowski-Spector, 1973) identify cultural oppression as instrumental in developing nonassertiveness. This point of view suggests that members of any identifiably powerless group within the culture (i.e., women) will have internalized nonassertive attitudes and will, therefore, profit from assertion training.

The anti-assertive influence of these basic societal systems has resulted in a 'built-in' set of limits on the self-fulfilling actions of many persons (Alberti and Emmons, 1970, p. 7).

This view is consistent with Allport (1958) who postulates:

What people think of us is bound to some degree to fashion what we are....Suffering from frustration induced by discrimination and disparagement leads to sensitization and concern which, if the individual is basically intro-punitive lead to... withdrawal and passivity...self-hate...neuroticism (pp. 155, 157).

While this view may provide a theoretical frame of reference to begin the identification of specific assertive/nonassertive behaviors, it also points to another void in the existing literature. There is no mention within the assertion literature of the positive behaviors which also may have resulted from the cultural conditioning of women as an oppressed group or any discussion of how--on what basis or criteria--the distinction will be made between negative behaviors needing a training response and positive behaviors which should not become a focus for change. This clearly reflects value questions around the quality of human behavior and human interaction. In view of the mid-70's popular fad of training all women to change from "Pussycats to Panthers" (Dubrow, 1975), this paucity of ethical dialogue by those professionally involved appears most relevant.

Rationale for training. Wolpe (1973) presents the following as a rationale for training in assertion. Assertive training is required when:

...the patient [is] inhibited from the performance of 'normal' behavior because of neurotic fear... is inhibited from saying or doing what is reasonable and right... (p. 81).

Fodor (1974) suggests that a rationale for utilizing assertion training with women exists due to the high incidence of female anxiety arising from sex role conflict.

Going back over case histories of women treated over the past five years, it is impressive how often sex role conflict is a core issue underlying symptoms in women patients, even when the cases were not originally perceived in this fashion (p. 23).

Assertion training, according to Fodor, would be helpful for the

extinction or expansion of old roles or the learning of new ones. A behavioral approach could challenge the 'morality' of conforming to sex role stereotypes and provide reinforcements so that prestige, competence or goodness can now be associated with new or expanded interests and role behaviors (p. 23).

In both Wolpe and Fodor's writings, there is an implicit assumption of individual cognizance of an alternative behavior which is blocked. It is the blocking process which produces the anxiety symptoms to which assertion training then responds.

An opposing rationale exists within the literature (Eisler and Hersen, 1973; Eisler, et.al., 1973; Hersen, et.al., 1973; Laws and Serber, 1971; Lazarus, 1971) which indicates:

...that for many of the patients who fail to evidence appropriate interaction in interpersonal settings the relevant verbal and nonverbal responses have never been learned...mere practice in the absence of additional techniques will not lead to behavioral change on either the verbal or nonverbal components of assertiveness... an individual evidencing a behavioral deficit must be



taught a new way of responding as appropriate responses are simply unavailable in his current repertoire (Hersen, et.al., 1973, p. 505).

It would appear that Jakowski-Spector (1973), Phelps and Austin (1975) and Alberti and Emmons (1970) support learning theory over anxiety reduction as a more pressing need for women as a group since they have chosen to develop books and films for the female client rather than writing for the therapist who will treat clients in a therapeutic setting. Either hypothesis (i.e., learning theory or anxiety reduction) could work toward a rationale for assertive training for women since the literature on women suggests that both unlearned behaviors and internalized anxiety may be factors for professional women.

Absent again in the discussion of a rationale for assertion training is any discussion of the value issues involved. In a sexist culture, to consider assertion training for women, values are clearly a crucial dimension. Wolpe, in the quote above, appears to assume agreement on what is "reasonable and right" for example. The literature, however, provides illustration of assertion training being used to support male dominance, traditional sex-role behaviors and the blaming of the female for male maladaptive behaviors (MacPherson, 1972; Edwards, 1972; Cautela and Wisocki, 1968; Neuman, 1969). Two examples will illustrate. MacPherson (1972) reports on using assertion training combined with shock to train a woman to become assertive with her mother and appropriately nonassertive

with her husband. He describes the woman's relationship with her husband as:

She was hypercritical and aggressive toward her husband, a rather mild professional man who sought relief from his wife's tirades by immersing himself in evening committee work and was seldom at home (p. 99).

Examples of appropriate responses, according to MacPherson, include:

Situation "Your husband comes in late and supper you have made is spoiled."

Appropriate Response "I'm sorry your supper is a bit dried up, shall I get you something else?"

Situation "Your husband comes home after working in the office and falls asleep in the chair. When he wakes up you say:"

Appropriate Response "You must be very tired, can I get you something? (p. 100)."

In a second study, Edwards (1972) reports the case of a physician who came to him for treatment for homosexual pedophilia. In a clinical conference discussing this case, Zuckerman (1972) made the following statement illustrating the assumption of the rightness of the traditional roles:

Assertive training is part of defining his role--you're the man in the house, you're supposed to do these things; your wife is supposed to do those things. They seem to be floundering and it is just a matter of getting back on that track with these sanctions of a psychiatrist (p. 62).

While both the MacPherson and Edwards studies are noted by other writers within the literature (Hersen, et.al., 1973; Alberti and Emmons, 1970), there is not one statement or question regarding the blatant sexism of their work.



In summary, it appears that within the literature, the rationale for assertion training is understood by some (Wolpe, 1969; Fodor, 1974) to be treatment for anxiety and by others (Alberti and Emmons, 1970; Eisler and Hersen, 1973; Eisler, et.al., 1973; Hersen, et.al., 1973; Laws and Serber, 1971; Lazarus, 1971) to be teaching previously unknown behaviors. A discussion of value questions involved in the development of a rationale is absent within the literature.

Therapeutic efficacy. Much of the evidence of therapeutic efficacy of assertion training has been reported in case-study, anecdotal or clinical reports (Cautela, 1966; Gittelman, 1965; Kelly, 1955; Lazarus, 1965, 1968; Wolpe, 1958, 1969; Wolpe and Lazarus, 1966). The literature cited relies heavily on global clinical judgments of improvements.

From the standpoint of uncontrolled clinical observation, these [assertion training] groups seems to have elicited significant positive behavior change in nearly all the participants. The majority report a transfer of assertive and expressive modes of behavior to all their interpersonal encounters (Lazarus, 1968, p. 170).

Hedquite and Weinhold (1970) suggest that a more relevant manner to question effectiveness would be:

What treatment, by whom, is most effective for this individual, with that specific problem and under which set of circumstances (p. 237).

Two parts of that question are beginning to receive attention in the literature: what treatment and under which set of circumstances?

McFall and his colleagues (McFall and Marston, 1970; McFall and Lillesand, 1971; McFall and Twentyman, 1972) have begun to

isolate treatment variables in order to provide data as to variable effectiveness. The first study in this series (McFall and Marston, 1970) reports that behavior rehearsal resulted in significant improvements in assertive performance. McFall and Lillesand (1971) report significant improvements in assertive performance following behavioral rehearsal with modeling and coaching. McFall and Twentyman (1972) found rehearsal and coaching made significant additive contributions to improved assertion responses.

Lazarus, in a separate study (1966) also found significant change through utilizing behavioral rehearsal. Eisler, et.al., (1973) found significant change occurred through utilizing modeling; Friedman (1971) through modeling plus role playing and Hersen, et.al. (1973) through modeling plus instruction. Lomont, Gilner, Spector and Skinner (1969) showed assertion training resulted in significantly greater reduction on MMPI clinical scales than insight therapy. They did not identify training specifics, however, and no long term follow-up was reported. Rathus (1972) reported inconclusive results between a fear discussion group and an assertion training group. It is interesting to note that he provided out-of-training practice on tasks derived from Salter's excitatory exercises and in-training discussion. The choice of discussion over practice is counter to most reported assertion training. In addition, Salter's excitatory exercises are not situation specific.

Examining the circumstances for training as suggested by Hedquist and Weinhold (1970) involves questioning the training structures

utilized. Two structures for assertion training are presented within the literature. Edwards (1972), MacPherson (1972), and Wolpe (1958, 1966) all utilize assertion training in a one to one structure within therapy while others (Fensterheim, 1972; Lazarus, 1968; Rathus, 1972; Eisler, et.al., 1973) utilize the group structure for training.

Fensterheim (1972) advocates using the group structure for additional support and reinforcement to what the therapist can provide. Alberti and Emmons (1970) suggest that a group setting provides the advantages of additional feedback, reinforcement, modeling and support from others encountering similarly difficult situations. Phelps and Austin (1975) provide directions to their readers on organizing a group.

There is no discussion within the literature of criteria to evaluate the relative merits of either structure. It would appear that one direction to be explored further is the use of the group structure with women. In countering the effects of sexism as one form of oppression, Friere's work (1972) suggests that the process of connecting with others within your own group is necessary for change to occur.

Two sources raise the issue of support or safety in developing assertive behaviors (McFall and Lillesand, 1971; Hedquist and Weinhold, 1970). McFall and Lillesand (1971) used an overt response pattern to behavioral stimuli with one group of subjects and a covert response pattern to the same stimuli with a second group. Their findings

indicated greater increases in assertive behavior for the group using the covert response method. In discussing these findings, they hypothesize:

...the covert procedure protects Ss from any external evaluation, minimizes avoidance behavior, and thereby fosters learning (p. 322).

In a six-week follow-up with Ss from an assertive training group who had shown increases in assertive behavior, Hedquist and Weinhold (1970) found the changes had not held. They hypothesize:

One possible explanation for the treated subjects drop in verbal assertiveness during the follow-up period 6 weeks later...may be that these subjects had not been able to build social reinforcement bridges to their own environment sufficiently strong enough to maintain these complex social responses without the help of the group (p. 242).

Although this work of Hedquist and Weinhold (1970) and McFall and Lillesand (1971) raises the issues of safety and support for change, neither they nor others discuss these issues in terms of women's needs or women's conditioning.

Missing within the literature also is any discussion of what effectiveness means. There is an implicit assumption in Alberti and Emmon's (1970) discussion of oppression that assertive behavior is in the direction of personal power and freedom. This issue, however, remains unexamined to date.

In summary, the literature does not agree on whether assertion is part of aggressive behavior or separate. There is the beginning of identifying some specific behaviors which comprise assertiveness. These behaviors appear to be similar to the behaviors identified by



Hersey and Blanchard (1969) as organizational high task leadership behaviors and by Bunker and Seashore (1976) as unlearned behaviors for women.

The literature views assertion training as both a therapeutic intervention to reduce anxiety and as a teaching model to respond to unlearned behaviors. The literature does not substantiate clearly that certain techniques produce certain behavioral changes which will either be maintained over time or will be generalized into similar and related situations. There is, however, within the literature, the indication of an emerging pattern of increasing interpersonal/social comfortableness through a training process involving the client in active interaction with either a trainer/therapist or a teaching surrogate, i.e., tapes, in situation specific behavior rehearsals. There is also indication that psychological safety may be an important variable in the process of changing to more assertive behaviors although this suggestion is general rather than sex-specific. This suggestion of psychological safety would support other change theory (Allport, 1958; Schein and Bennis, 1965; Klopff, et.al., 1969) which indicates that individual change cannot occur when the personal threat level is perceived as too high. There is a paucity of literature discussing either assertion training as it relates to women's issues or women's professional functioning or discussing the values and ethics involved in the utilization of the method.

#### IV. SUMMARY

This chapter presented the results of a review of the literature as it related to the external and internal barriers for women's professional functioning as well as the literature about utilizing assertion training as a method of responding to the identified barriers for women. The review of the literature suggested the following external barriers exist for professional women: the existing models for organizations and managerial functioning are consistent with stereotypic male behaviors; a "double message" about effective professional functioning exists; traditional sex role stereotypes regarding women's behavior continue to exist; and there is a prevalence of negative attitudes and myths regarding women's ability to function professionally. Women as a group have internalized the discrimination. Women have higher needs for affiliation, may have anxiety about success when their success is in conflict with affiliation and support and may fear failure or have a failure orientation due to unlearned skills.

The literature on assertion training does not agree on whether assertion is part of aggressive behavior or separate and has only the beginning suggestions for specific behaviors comprising assertiveness. There is the suggestion that assertion training is helpful in both teaching previously unlearned behaviors and in reducing anxiety. The literature supports the use of groups as an effective training structure.



There is a need for further exploration of the meaning of assertive behavior for professional women. More in-depth studies examining both the value questions involved in choosing a specific behavior and the situations in which particular behaviors are viewed as appropriate by women are needed. This study is an examination of an assertion training program for professional women which describes both the training and the application of that training by the individual participants. In Chapter III the structure and procedures utilized in this study are described in detail.

### CHAPTER III

#### DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURES

The purpose of this research was to present an intensive case study of an assertion training program for professional women. In selecting the case study method of research, the following point of view expressed by Homans (1949) served as a helpful guideline:

People who write about methodology often forget that it is a matter of strategy, not of morals. There are neither good nor bad methods, but only methods that are more or less effective under particular circumstances in reaching objectives on the way to a distant goal (p. 330).

#### RATIONALE FOR USE OF THE CASE STUDY METHOD

The review of the literature suggested that there is a paucity of information regarding assertion training as it relates specifically to women. There is little discussion about how either the selection of appropriate behaviors or the analysis of situations which may demand assertiveness relates to the sex role conditioning, both positive and negative, of women. Additionally, there is little discussion of what factors support change for women. The case study, as a research method, is particularly well suited to studies undertaken in this type of developing field. A case study is designed to utilize, as fully as possible, the advantages of seeing a situation as a whole and of attempting to understand fundamental relationships.

Weiss and Rein (1970) recommend the use of process oriented case analysis as more appropriate for developing areas of study.

They note that the literature of more experimental designs include: the difficulty in selecting satisfactory criteria; the lack of a controlled situation; the lack of standardized treatments and the limited scope of information which can be produced by more experimental designs. In identifying research needs in O.D., Schmuck and Miles (1971) recommend: (1) increased emphasis be given to documenting the sequence of events; (2) detailed, ordered information regarding incidents during and between training events be included; and (3) more frequent use be made of a variety of measures including systematic observation, postmeeting reactions and interviews.

Finally, the case study method of research was chosen because it provided a structure for women to speak of their own experiences of change and assertion in the least restrictive manner. As identified in the review of literature, the current model for professional behavior is male sex role specified. In beginning to develop other models, a case study has the advantage of providing a structure to observe the process of growth or change. "From this...can come the insights which can furnish the hypotheses for later, more detailed, quantitative study (Katz and Festinger, 1953, p. 138)."

#### DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURES

In order for a case study to provide the advantages of observing the process of growth or change, it must include: data from several phases of the intervention; provide rigorous description and

conceptualization of the process, e.g., interactions, critical incidents, and their effect on subsequent actions (Walton, 1972).

The most useful data gathering techniques in attempting to describe the process of change are interview and observation. The interview permits "...detailed study of individuals' attitudes (and perceptions) by facilitating free and spontaneous expression (Lombard, 1951, p. 244)."

Accordingly, the following data gathering procedures were designed and utilized.

Pre-Training Interview. A fourteen question interview schedule was individually administered to each participant prior to the training by an interviewer trained specifically for this task. Each interview lasted for one hour and was designed to secure information on (1) how participants perceived their own behavior in situations where assertion might be a possible behavioral response, (2) what factors participants identify as supporting or inhibiting their functioning, (3) what goals did participants hold for themselves, and (4) what models (both positive and negative), incentives and concerns exists for each participant regarding the development of assertive skills.

The goals of the interview were to (1) gather information in order to somewhat individualize the training design and (2) gather information for this study about women's needs and concerns about their behavioral choices. A copy of the pre-training interview schedule is presented in Appendix A.

Group selection and composition. Ten women were selected into the training group from the nineteen who volunteered. All nineteen met the criteria of female management level professionals within human service agencies who identified wanting to increase their assertion skills. Since several women volunteered from the same agency, an arbitrary selection of one woman per organization was made by the trainer in order to limit the group to ten.

The age of the participants ranged from twenty-three to thirty-seven. Three women were married, two divorced and five single. The two divorced women were the only participants with children.

The amount of time participants had been in their current job ranged from two months to three years. The average time on the current job was eighteen months. Five of the ten women had experience in management prior to this job. Nine of the women worked in agencies organized on a traditional hierarchical model of authority. One was working in a non-hierarchical model. Of the nine in traditional organizations, one held the top position, four held the second to the top position, two were third in line, one was fourth and one was entry level management. All had people below their job level within the organization with whom they had work contact.

Format of training. Training sessions were held one night a week for a period of eight weeks. Each session lasted two and a half hours. Participants were given material to read prior to the beginning of the training. This material was designed to provide



a broad conceptual framework and included selections on role conditioning in women, assertive behaviors and assertive training, and validation of the self.

Participants were also give reading material at the end of sessions one and two. This material was designed to provide specific information on initiating and setting limits within an interpersonal transaction as well as common communication patterns which are generally used to avoid direct assertion.

The goal in providing participants with this material was to provide a vehicle for the development of a common vocabulary and common conceptual understandings in order to begin and facilitate the process of learning as well as the process of working together as a group. This pre-reading material is included with the training design in Appendix B.

Each session included discussion of theoretical material, discussion of experiences in which assertion was either tried or might have been a behavioral option, practice/role play experiences and feedback on role play behavior from both the trainer and the other participants.

Goals of training. The goals of the training were twofold. First was to teach concepts and skills involved in assertive behavior. The training material which focused on the content of teaching assertive behavior was organized into three broad categories which were labeled (1) "Validating Your Inner Space", (2) "Making Clear Statements About Your Own Space", and (3) "Making Clear Statements About What I Don't Want".




Within "Validating Your Inner Space" the goals were designed to help participants increase their awareness of their individual rights, to gain insight into how and in what areas self-negation may have occurred and to develop some skills which would be helpful in increasing self-validation. The content of Session I was designed to focus on this area.

The goals within "Making Clear Statements about Your Own Space" focused on increasing understanding and skill in identifying and stating personal wants and thoughts within a transaction. The skills identified here are those required for initiating within a relationship. Session II content was developed around this area.

In the third category, "Making Clear Statements about What I Don't Want" the goals were directed toward increasing understanding and skill in setting personal limits and saying no within a transaction. Session III was designed to focus on this area.

Thus the over-all goals involved in teaching assertive behavior included helping participants

- 
1. develop an understanding of assertive behavior as distinct from withdrawn or aggressive behavior
  2. develop an understanding of the behaviors involved in assertiveness
  3. develop an understanding of the blocks to assertive behavior
  4. develop skills of assertive behavior in specifically identified situations

The second goal of training was to provide a structure for the participants to evaluate (1) under what circumstances assertive

behavior is beneficial to professional women, (2) which behaviors are congruent with the values these women hold about professional relationships and (3) what supports and blocks women functioning assertively in a professional setting.

Each of the eight training sessions included goals in both the area of developing assertive behaviors and in evaluating the relevance of assertiveness for women within a professional setting. The specific goals are presented below in the session plan.

Goals and content of sessions. The specific goals and content for each session are presented below. The complete training manual is presented in Appendix B.

#### Session 1

- Goals:
1. To begin the process of building a working group with interpersonal support and safety.
  2. To clarify and make available to the group individual expectations (i.e., participant and trainer) of the training program.
  3. To increase understanding of the conceptual material provided as pre-workshop reading.
  4. To help individuals begin to identify thoughts, feelings, etc. which may have been used to evaluate self in a negative way.
  5. To begin describing those internal thoughts and feelings in a non-evaluative manner to another person.
  6. To receive non-evaluative feedback on the logic and commonality of "inside" space.
  7. To receive reinforcement for the personal right to that "inside" space.
  8. To begin practicing non-evaluative feedback.

## Agenda:

One hour: introductions, sharing expectations, sharing of design of training program and discussion of concepts involved in the pre-workshop reading material.

One hour: structured experience utilizing rotating dyads working with completing stem sentences. The stem sentences focus on sharing of difficult situations within a professional setting with structured validating feedback from the dyad partner. The exercise concludes with a group discussion to evaluate the experience.

One-half hour: session evaluation and directions for between session journal keeping.

## Session 2

- Goals:
1. Increase support among group members.
  2. Evaluate and understand experiences during the past week which involve assertion.
  3. Share successes with assertiveness.
  4. Practice diagnosing a segment of communication in order to be able to recognize "co-out" communication.
  5. Begin developing clear "I want" statements.
  6. Focus on individual situations where making clear statements in an assertive way is difficult.

7. Practice assertive statements in order to develop/increase skill.
8. Develop awareness of non-verbal communication of withdrawal or anger.

Agenda:

Thirty minutes: Discussion on past week's experiences around the use of assertion including the identification of difficult situations which participants responded to in ways they were not pleased with. Discussion on pre-session reading material.

One hour: A structured experience using pre-written situations occurring within a professional setting with alternative choice responses representing different forms of "cop-out" communication. Following each situation, assertive responses to that situation will be developed.

Forty-five minutes: Introduction of non-verbal checklist and role play of situations identified by participants with trainer and participants coaching and modeling.

Fifteen minutes: Session evaluation.

Session 3

- Goals:
1. Evaluate and understand experiences during the past week which involved assertion.
  2. Share successes with assertion.
  3. Increase understanding of communication traps involved in setting limits.

4. Identify types of communication occurring within a transaction.
5. Develop skill in assertive responses.

Agenda:

Thirty minutes: Discussion on past week's experiences around the use of assertion including the identification of difficult situations which participants responded to in ways they were not pleased with.

Discussion on pre-session reading material.

Forty-five minutes: A structured experience using pre-written situations occurring within a professional setting with a pre-written response. Each response is to be analyzed for the type of communication pattern it represents. Assertive responses to each situation are then to be developed.

One hour: Role play of situations identified by participants with trainer and other participants coaching and modeling.

Fifteen minutes: Session evaluation.

Sessions 4-8

Goals:

1. Analysis of on-the-job situations where assertiveness was/might have been utilized.
2. Analysis of reactions to assertive behavior or attempts at assertiveness.
3. Identification of alternative behaviors possible in professional situations.



4. Increase understanding of specific assertive behaviors.
5. Increase skills at both initiating and responding in an assertive manner in specifically identified situations.

Agenda:

In each of these five sessions, participants will bring to the group situations in which they were personally involved within their professional functioning. These situations will be used for discussion, analysis and role play. Modeling and feedback will be provided during the role play situations by the trainer and other participants.

Observation. Two women worked with the trainer in an observer/recorder role for the training sessions. Each of these women had had previous training both in working with groups and in writing behavioral descriptions. It was decided, prior to the training, that both women would attend the first session and write behavioral descriptions during designated time periods. After the session the observers met with the trainer to assess the material. A scale (Appendix C) was developed to use for observation/recording in subsequent sessions. The criteria for including categories on the scale were: (1) each observer had described the same behavior in a similar manner, (2) the trainer, in her process notes, had included a similar description of the behavior, and (3) there was support within the literature to indicate that this behavior had relevance in some way to women's functioning effectively as leaders within organizations.

The scale which resulted included four items which related to the method of communication (i.e., loudness of voice/soft and hard to hear voice; fluency of speaking/hesitant manner of speaking; direct eye contact/avoidance of eye contact; and appropriate affect/inappropriate laughter). Two items were included on the scale which identified the content of the communication (i.e., task content and relationship content).

On subsequent sessions recorders alternated observing with one observer present at each session. Recorder observations were shared with the trainer at the conclusion of each session in order to aid the trainer in the training process. The recorders did not give any direct feedback to participants.

Three of the items selected for recording relating to the method of communication (i.e., loudness of voice, fluency of speaking and eye contact) are consistent with Serber's (1972) specific assertive behaviors. The fourth item (appropriate affect/inappropriate laughter) represents one style of emotional expression identified by Wolpe and Lazarus (1966) as a specific of assertiveness. Inappropriate laughter also is included on Pierce's (1973) list of internalized behaviors for women resulting from sex-role discrimination.

The two items which recorders observed relative to the content of communication were task content or relationship content. Task statements included those verbal communications which focused on

the work of the group or individual work within the group including: suggesting a task, clarifying or summarizing the work, giving directions, expressing views or opinions and sharing information. Relationship content included statements or questions which focused on how people were functioning with each other, how the group was functioning and what effect this had on individuals or how members were feeling. The decision to record these two aspects of communication received support from Bunker and Seashore's (1976) suggestion that professional women need to learn proactiveness, expressing views first rather than soliciting other's views as well as clarity, decisiveness and ability to make decisions. Kanter's view (1976) that professional women need to learn task orientation, intellectualization and more impersonal behavior served as an additional guide.

In addition, participants worked with a Checklist for Feedback (Appendix D) which included an expanded list of possible nonassertive methods of communication. Participants were asked to observe each other in role play situations according to the following dimensions: Eye Contact (looking down, avoiding or shifting of focus); Voice Tone (unsure, hesitant, quiet, hard to hear, too high pitched, cracking, too fast, nervous sounding, pleading, little girl, sexually inviting); Laughter and Smiling; Facial Expression (excessive laughter or smiling, inappropriately timed laughing and smiling, facial expression didn't match words/message); Body Language (nervous, excessive or inappropriate movement, passive, tilted head, moving away).

The participants' observations were used in direct verbal feedback at the conclusion of an initial role play and were not collected during the course of the training. This type of immediate feedback provides the opportunity for the data to be checked out with other observers close to the time the behavior occurred as well as providing an opportunity for the recipient to react to the feedback and utilize observations in continuing behavioral practice.

Thus the goal of the participants' observations was immediate feedback for skill development and understanding of the participants while the goal of the recorders observations was to collect an on-going description in order to see if any pattern emerged during the training. Although no reliability was established on the recorder scale, it was felt that this type of data would nonetheless add to the descriptive material of this study.

Post-session evaluation. In order to add to descriptive materials for the case study and to provide some assessment of participants' response to the training design, Post-session evaluation forms (Appendix E) were circulated and returned at the end of each of the eight training sessions.

Post session evaluation is a common means of measuring participants satisfaction with a session and of assessing some aspect of that experience as participants perceived the experience. The form designed for this training utilized seven questions to solicit participants' perception of (1) training format, (2) trainer behavior, (3) a critical incident within their own behavior during the session,



and (4) their immediate goals for the coming week as a result of the session.

Questions 1 and 2 asked for an evaluation of the training session just experienced in an open ended design in order to encourage more spontaneous responses (i.e., The most helpful part of the training tonight was:, The least helpful part of the training tonight was:). Questions 3 and 4 solicited information on how participants experienced the helpfulness of the trainer's behavior. Question 3 was open-ended, asking what in the trainer's behavior was or would have been helpful. Question 4 asked for a rating on the extent of the trainer's helpfulness ranging from not at all on one extreme to too much at the other extreme.

Question 5 was a critical incident form asking participants to describe an incident (either positive or negative) occurring during the session which seemed most important in regard to the individual's behavioral change goals. Participants were asked to rate this incident in terms of importance on a scale ranging from not very to very important.

Questions 6 and 7 were structured to identify participants' current goals. Question 6 asked participants to state what they hoped, planned and were sure they would do as a result of this session. Question 7 asked for a more detailed description of what situation would be focused on by the participants during the coming week for trying assertive behavior.



The results of the post-session evaluation are presented in Chapter IV.

Participant's journals. Participants were asked to keep on-going journals during the eight weeks of training. This structure for the recording of self-observation permitted each woman to document her own behavior, the context in which that behavior occurred and her reactions to the total transaction between each session.

The use of journals provides an open structure for the participants to record both a description of what they are experiencing and an analysis of the applicability of assertive behavior within those situations. Specifically, the journal format asked women to describe:

1. what happened during the week regarding the goal planning which they had done at the previous session.
2. situations in which she was or wanted to be assertive including what led up to that behavior and what followed that behavior.
3. reactions from others in her environment to her use of assertive behavior.
4. behaviors or factors which she experienced as supporting and/or blocking of her assertive behaviors.

The journal forms are included in Appendix F. The results of the journals are presented in Chapter IV.

Follow-up interview. A sixteen question interview schedule was individually administered to each participant subsequent to the training by an interviewer trained specifically for this task. Each interview lasted for one hour and was designed to secure information on (1) what behaviors participants perceived had changed and which

behaviors had remained unchanged; (2) an individual description of what each woman felt had supported and blocked changes for her; and (3) an evaluation of the total training design including what elements were both helpful and not helpful.

The goals of the interviewer were to provide an open-ended but structured vehicle for the participants to summarize both their own individual experience with assertion training and to evaluate the total training design which was used. A copy of the Follow-up Interview schedule is presented in Appendix G.

#### SUMMARY

This chapter presented a rationale for the use of the case study method. Data collection procedures were described as well as the training design which was utilized. Data collection procedures included interview and observation. Observation, as a way to describe a process, was done by participants through post-session evaluation, Participant Feedback Checklists, and on-going journals. Observation by recorders included elements of the method and content of the communication. Interviews were held individually prior to and at the conclusion of the training. Results of the data will be presented in Chapter IV.

## C H A P T E R I V

## THE CASE STUDY

An eight week assertion training program for professional women was conducted for ten preselected women functioning on the managerial level within human service agencies. A pre/post interview was administered individually with each woman. Each woman filled out a weekly post-session evaluation form and was asked to keep an on-going weekly journal of her experiences with assertiveness. Within this chapter, the results of the interview, post-session evaluation forms and journals will be presented along with a description of the training as it occurred.

## PRE-INTERVIEW

The pre-training interview was designed to secure information on (1) how participants perceived their own behavior in situations where assertion might be a possible behavioral response, (2) what factors participants identify as supporting or inhibiting their functioning, (3) what goals did participants hold for themselves, and (4) what models (both positive and negative), incentives and concerns existed for each participant regarding the development of assertive skills.

How participants perceived their own behavior. Four questions were structured to secure information regarding how each participant viewed her own behavior (e.g., #1,3,4,5). In Question 1, a series

of ten non-support situations which could occur to any professional woman were presented. Participants were asked what their usual behavior would be in such a situation. Almost equal numbers of respondents indicated they would act directly or initiate a response as indicated they would be indirect or withdraw from that situation (i.e., 44 responses were direct and 47 indicated indirectness or withdrawal).

An almost equal number of women indicated they would state directly what they wanted or did not want as indicated, they would question or comment on the other person's attitude or the situation (i.e., 31 statements with Ss thought or feeling as the subject of the sentence were given as response examples while 26 response examples were either questions or statements focusing on data external to the S.).

Thus participants in this sample felt that about half of the time they would deal directly with what they wanted or didn't want in situations. When asked if they were satisfied with this response, all participants indicated dissatisfaction. Each participant indicated that she would like to be less reactive than she presently perceived herself to be.

In describing situations where participants perceived themselves to be more assertive (i.e., Question 3: a forced choice between options), the following was reported.

- a. 6 in one to one contact      or      4 in a group
- b. 6 with people you know      or      4 with strangers
- c. 2 with males      or      8 with females
- d. 5 in personal situations      or      5 in work situations
- e. 8 with people with equal  
    organizational rank or  
    2 lower organizational rank      or      0 higher organizational rank.

In Questions 4 and 5, a six point scale was used and each woman was asked to rate herself in terms of her professional behavior at the present time and a year ago (i.e., 1 represents highly assertive to 6 representing not at all assertive). No participants viewed themselves at either extreme of the continuum. Seven participants felt they had increased their assertive behavior from a year ago, one felt she had remained at the same level, and two perceived themselves as presently being somewhat less assertive than a year ago.

Supports and blocks to professional functioning. Question 2 was designed to ask for information regarding what supported and what inhibited or blocked participants professionally in three areas: (1) telling people what you think, (2) telling people what you want, and (3) saying no. Participants' responses regarding what made it easiest to behave in these ways fell into three general categories: lack of vulnerability, the existence of external safety and support, and the existence of an external authority or reason for the behavior.

Lack of vulnerability included such statements as: "having all the facts", "being sure I am right", "when I am clear", "when I



have had time to think through all the issues involved in the situation". In identifying external safety and support as a factor supporting their behavior, statements were made like: "the other person respects me", "the other person responds as if I'm reasonable", "the other person is not angry", "other people have the same opinion", "other person recognizes and appreciates me and my skills". Examples of an external reason or authority which participants felt would support their behavior included: "the issue is organizational and external to me", "it's part of the job expectation", "it's good for the agency", "I could say no if I were sick".

Participants' responses regarding what made it difficult or impossible for them to behave in these ways fell into four general categories: vulnerability; negative, attacking or guilt producing behavior from the other person; authority situations; and situations where the other person is vulnerable.

Examples of statements describing the factors which produced vulnerability and, therefore, inhibited functioning included: "when I'm unclear", "when I'm over-invested in the issue", "when my emotions are involved", "when it's not really important, I feel I don't really need it", "when I don't have a good reason". In identifying negative, attacking or guilt producing behavior from the other person as a block, examples given were: "other person patronizing", "other person defensive", "others get angry or upset", "others are indirect". Examples of statements indicating that dealing with

authority is difficult or inhibiting include: "dealing with superiors", "dealing with men", "saying what I think or want to any authority figure". Examples of the perceived vulnerability of the other person serving as an inhibitor include: "issues dealing with women and children", "when others will be disappointed", "when the other person is hassled by my behavior", "with women".

Participant goals. Three questions within the interview schedule were designed to secure information on participant's goals (e.g., #s 6,7,8). In Question 6 each participant was asked to identify problem areas in which she would like to respond more assertively. In some responses categories or types of people were identified. These included authority figures, men, groups, people perceived as "less" (i.e., children, secretaries, victims), marriage partner or person in significant relationship and people who are dominating. Participants identified wanting to increase their skills at initiating in the following areas: getting own needs met more often, being able to act when right, giving critical feedback and expressing or acting more effectively on abilities. Two areas were identified as goals for increasing skills at reacting: dealing with conflict and dealing with domination.

In Question 7 participants were asked about areas where they would like to be less assertive than they presently perceive themselves to be. Six participants responded that there were no areas where they would like to be less assertive. Four participants identified that they would like to decrease their assertive behavior

in the following areas: in marriage relationship, with confused people, with passive people, with children and in teaching.

Participants were asked to identify any types of situations in which they perceived themselves as non-assertive but had no desire to change (Question 8). Eight of the ten participants identified that there were areas like this for them and identified the following situations: with parents, with agency board, with males in a dating situation, when not interested in person relating to, in initiating friendships, when someone is taking care of subject, when subject is in helping or facilitation role or trying to "prove" self.

Role models, incentives and concerns. Information about the existence and nature of role models was solicited in Questions 10 and 11. In Question 10 each participant was asked to think of a woman she admired and describe that woman. The following behaviors were identified: honesty, directness, clear communication, open with and respectful of other people, has skills and accomplishments, is able to make fast judgments and decisions, says no and sets limits, functions in leadership capacities, lives alone. Further description included: is strong, self-confident, understands self and is responsible for self, is committed to something and is continuously learning, is intelligent, other people feel good about her.

Question 11 was designed to provide a more complete picture of available models. Each participant was instructed to think of a

woman she would describe as being assertive but reacted to in a negative manner and to then describe what of the woman's behavior she did not like. The following characteristics were identified: she doesn't listen to others, shows lack of concern or awareness of others, is insensitive, doesn't respect other's limits, is inflexible or rigid, shallow, elitist, loud, insincere, self-righteous, plays games, is devious and talks too much.

In Question 12 each participant was asked to identify positive possible consequences anticipated from becoming more assertive. There were nineteen consequences projected which focused on changed, more positive feeling about self and six consequences which identified increased behavioral skills (i.e., being able to speak out in a group). It was also anticipated that becoming more assertive would cause others to feel better about the participant and to behave in more helpful ways with the participant (i.e., be more clear, open, honest, less defensive).

In Questions 13 and 14 participants were instructed to identify concerns or fears they might have regarding changing their behavior toward more assertiveness. Question 13 was focused on identifying possible negative consequences of increased assertiveness. Concerns about their own behavior fell into two categories: (1) that Ss would develop inappropriate behavior which would have a negative effect on others and (2) that S would lose sensitivity to others and to self. Negative consequences projected in terms of others



response to increased assertiveness focused on fear of rejection including being judged or evaluated negatively by others.

Finally, in Question 14 eight possible concerns around developing more assertiveness were identified. Participants were instructed to respond to each as (N) not at all a concern; (S) somewhat a concern; or (V) very much a concern. The following responses were given.

- |    |             |             |             |                                                                   |
|----|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------|
| a. | <u>(6N)</u> | <u>(3S)</u> | <u>(1V)</u> | I may not be able to change                                       |
| b. | <u>(5N)</u> | <u>(4S)</u> | <u>(1V)</u> | I may not like the changes afterwards                             |
| c. | <u>(6N)</u> | <u>(3S)</u> | <u>(1V)</u> | I may lose my current support group                               |
| d. | <u>(3N)</u> | <u>(6S)</u> | <u>(1V)</u> | I may offend people by being assertive                            |
| e. | <u>(5N)</u> | <u>(4S)</u> | <u>(1V)</u> | I may jeopardize a significant relationship                       |
| f. | <u>(8N)</u> | <u>(1S)</u> | <u>(1V)</u> | My boss may not be able to handle my assertiveness                |
| g. | <u>(9N)</u> | <u>(1S)</u> | <u>(0V)</u> | I may lose my job if I act assertively                            |
| h. | <u>(7N)</u> | <u>(3S)</u> | <u>(0V)</u> | I may end up being so different no one will want to relate to me. |

### TRAINING

The training occurred one evening a week for two and a half hours a session over an eight week period. The training is described below by sessions as it occurred.

Session 1. The goals for the first session were threefold. First: to begin the process of building a safe, working group which necessitated providing ways for people to begin to get to know each other. Second: to establish a conceptual understanding of the differences between internal processes of thoughts and feelings and behavior which is an external process. Third: to provide



structured experiences which would both focus on separating the internal processes from behavior in order for that difference to be better understood and would provide validation for individual's rights to their internal processes free of evaluation.

The session began with the trainer asking participants to introduce themselves and share what expectations they brought to the training program. Three participants stated wanting to develop skills in assertion, two were hoping for more insight into how they functioned, two wanted to find out generally more about assertiveness, and three responded that they were unclear about their expectations. All but one participant spoke very softly during this introductory period. There were humorous remarks made throughout this part of the session with frequent general group laughter.

The trainer then shared her expectations of the training including an overview of the training design with the primary techniques which would be utilized (i.e., discussion, focused exercises, role playing and record keeping) and the purposes for each. The techniques and their rationale and the agenda for the first session were on newsprint on the wall of the room and copies are included in Appendix B.

A discussion was then initiated by the trainer on the pre-reading material. The discussion was characterized by short responses by participants, long silences and little connecting with what the previous participant may have said. The trainer intervened

with "I'm wondering if anyone has any sense of what's happening here?" The discussion moved to the difficulty of talking in a new group, the search for appropriateness, the need to know what is allowable and the unclearness initially of group norms. The connection was made that appropriate behavior was frequently externally determined and that it was difficult to feel comfortable and positive about yourself when unclearness existed regarding acceptable behavior. Being judged for who they were was a general concern which blocked action. The pre-reading material was then discussed in this context.

Following this discussion, the trainer introduced the stem sentence exercise which was designed to provide a structure for participants to talk in dyads about feelings in situations which are generally evaluated as negative (i.e., feeling dumb, disliking something, being disagreed with, wanting something which you think is unfair and being angry). The exercise was developed so that very structured validating feedback was directed by the trainer after each person spoke. At the conclusion of the exercise, the experience was processed. Some examples of comments by participants include: "It gave me a chance to put words to my feelings. I feel powerless when I don't get my feelings into words."; "I felt connected to person I was talking with"; "Saw the commonality of my experiences"; "The directed feedback felt awkward to me"; "It [the directed feedback] helped cause I have a hard time not giving advice".

One participant brought up her uncomfortableness since she didn't feel as professional as others in the group. This was

discussed and finally, at the suggestion of another participant, group members told what jobs they held professionally. The group concluded with the trainer explaining the record keeping of post session evaluation and journal keeping.

Session 2. There were three major goals for session 2: (1) to develop the ability to recognize "cop-out" communication in a verbal transaction; (2) to practice and increase skill at assertive statements; and (3) to identify and discuss specific difficulties and concerns with assertive behavior which are held by members in the group.

Between the first and second session, one participant withdrew from the group. In her conversation with the trainer she indicated that she felt unable to profit from training at this point in her life and was planning to enter individual therapy. The group size for this session, therefore, was nine participants.

The group began with a general sharing of what had been happening during the week which related to the assertive training. Most members reported trying new behavior or noticing after a situation that they behaved in a way that seemed new or different. Several noticed that their usual behavior was more assertive than they had previously thought. In all the examples given, individuals reported that their assertive behavior was received either positively or without a negative reaction.

The trainer introduced the "cop-out" chart (Appendix B) which was developed from the pre-reading material which participants had

between sessions one and two. The group and trainer discussed the material and gave examples from personal experience. The difference between assertion and abruptness was noted as a concern.

The group then subdivided into three groups to work with the Structured Communication Analysis exercise. Within this exercise six situations are presented which could be dealt with either assertively or through "cop-out" communication. Each situation was developed around issues which most professional women confront in a job situation (e.g., giving corrective feedback within a supervisory role; asking for leadership and responsibility on a task; asking for a certain salary; resigning from leadership on a task; refusing an invitation to an office party and refusing social contact with a colleague). After each situation, several alternative responses were given. Each of these responses illustrated a form of "cop-out" communication. The task of each group was to label the "cop-out" responses and then develop an assertive response to that situation.

Following that, the total group decided to role play the assertive responses which the subgroups had developed, utilizing the trainer and other group members for feedback and modeling. Four non-verbal behaviors (soft, unsure sounding voice, twisting of hands, head constantly shaking and laughter when content was serious) were identified during feedback as communicating nonassertiveness. The two situations which the group spent the most time discussing



and reworking in alternative role plays were: (1) asking for a specific salary, and (2) refusing social contact with a colleague. Participants identified that the former was difficult because of an underlying feeling that they were more lucky to get the job than the employer was to get them. The connection was made with frequently feeling powerless and reactive in professional situations and needing to know first what was externally acceptable. The second situation of refusing social contact with a colleague was discussed in terms of concern for other's feelings, a need to take care of others and nurture, a desire not to be rude and a fear of rejecting. The group session ended with post-session evaluation.

Session 3. The overall goals for session 3 were: (1) to be able to recognize communication traps which are commonly used to indirectly set limits within interpersonal transactions; (2) to practice and increase skills at assertive statements; and (3) to identify and discuss specific difficulties and concerns with assertive behavior which are held by these women. Three participants were absent from session 3; one was out of town on business and two were ill.

The session began with sharing experiences with assertion during the past week. Examples of individual situations which had occurred for participants included: "I've been recognizing when other people are using "cop-out" communication with me and have been able to deal with my issue in that situation directly rather than responding to the indirect communication"; "you know, being



assertive is making brief statements.' I tried it more this week when I realized how short it could be rather than a long, involved process."; "I'm getting questioned when I deal directly with someone if that's what I'm learning in my assertion group. The feedback is that they like my dealing directly."; "Yeah, people are watching and feeding back to me when I'm assertive because they know I'm in the training program." "I tried being assertive with a person in my agency and they backed down quickly. I didn't even have to follow through."

After the sharing of experiences, the trainer introduced the summary sheet on communication traps (i.e., blame, psych out, withdraw, create static) which was based on the pre-reading material for session 3 (Appendix B). The material was explained and discussed. Part of the discussion focused on how the communication traps parallel some of the cultural stereotypes of women and how women are both extended invitations to communicate in these ways and simultaneously are rewarded and punished for this type of behavior. Cigarette smoking was again raised as an issue. There was general discussion but no resolution.

Directions were given for the structured exercise on Identifying Response Patterns. In this exercise, the group subdivided into two groups of three persons each to analyze four situations which could occur for a professional woman (e.g., wanting to deal with a dominator in a meeting who was not allowing you "air time"; being in a meeting with a blocker; declining a social situation being

offered by a colleague; and recognizing that you have been professionally imposed on and wanting to set some limits to equalize the situation). Each situation was followed by a response which illustrated one of the communication traps. Groups were to label the type of communication trap the response represented, infer what feelings were present in each of the participants in the verbal transaction and develop an assertive response.

The exercise was then discussed in the total group and assertive responses which were developed were role played. The group spent the majority of the time discussing and role playing the situations dealing with the dominating group member and the refusal of social contact. The following concerns and opinions were expressed and discussed.

There was general agreement that feeling angry has an effect on the ability to communicate: "I want to fight, become more determined"; "I become confused and withdraw"; "I'm not sure I can be clear when I'm angry"; "I withdraw so I won't blow up". In discussion situation number four, however (recognizing you've been professionally imposed on), there was a general agreement that that was not difficult because being angry felt justified. Group members agreed that being able to act assertively was connected to understanding what was really going on. Unclearness about the dynamics or the behavior of the other person tended to be reacted to with withdrawal.

There was a consistent concern with how the receiver is feeling as a result of the assertive or attempted assertive statements in role play situations. The pattern was to stop after each role play not only to receive feedback on the assertive statement but for the person practicing to check with others in the role play about their feelings when statements were made. This was expressed in statements such as "That's a good statement. It preserves both people's integrity."; "Being assertive works out better for the other person too.". Most people stated that in some of the role plays (i.e., the rejecting of social contact) they strongly identified with the person being turned down and felt past rejections which they had experienced. This concern with not hurting others and remembering past interpersonal hurts surfaced verbally in all role plays which involved saying no or giving corrective feedback to another.

Group members also identified the need to understand more their own feelings and attitudes in attempting assertive statements. It was expressed that "If I am not sure or convinced, no matter what I say it will be an unclear message...my voice or the way I say it won't sound convincing.".

Session 4-8 were planned to continue practice and discussion in order to refine and extend the learning of assertive skills.

Session 4. The group decided they wanted to spend some time initially sharing experiences of the previous week before beginning

the role playing situations. The three members absent from last week's session were back and three other members were out sick. The discussion centered on subtle "put-downs" which all participants had been experiencing during the week. Participants related that colleagues were responding to them with statements such as: "Oh, is that what you're learning in your group"; (in a minimizing, belittling tone) "Why are you taking that course...you're already too assertive"; "you certainly don't need to learn to be any more assertive than you are". Members identified that some of the hostility they were experiencing from others related to their being more proactive and less passive than they had previously been in similar situations. One member also felt that her behavior was a challenge to the organizational norms which others were following and created a threat since it raised the question for others about their own behavior. She reported widespread dissatisfaction with the organization among staff but little active challenging of the ways in which things were done. There was only minimal talk within this discussion about participants' feelings when these situations occurred (threatened and angry were mentioned but not explored) and no discussion about alternative ways to handle this type of situation.

In developing the role play situations for the session, participants used situations in which they had been involved during the week with which they had been having difficulty dealing. The trainer provided a check-list for observation and feedback which summarized



the verbal and non-verbal behaviors the group had been working with during the previous three sessions. Seven situations were used.

1. I am meeting with the Superintendent of Schools. We have a task to do. He is rambling on about non-related things. I want to get the task completed.
2. I am in a car pool with a colleague. He continually dominates the conversation, talking mostly about cars which I'm not at all interested in. I want to either talk about work or be quiet.
3. I am in the conference room prior to a staff meeting. A colleague sits down and begins rambling on about something. I have work I need to get done in this time and don't want to talk.
4. A staff member (A) comes to me with a grievance about another staff member (B) who isn't present. I want to be helpful to all concerned without creating more staff problems. Staff member A is furious at what staff member B said to her. I don't want to take sides.
5. At a recent conference I met a male colleague from another agency. He wants to get in touch with me socially after the conference. I am not interested.
6. At a recent conference I met a female colleague from another agency. She wants to get in touch with me socially after the conference. She tells me she is feeling very isolated where she works and has no "strong professional women" she can relate to. I do not want to get involved in a social relationship.
7. The male colleague I met at the conference shows up in my office. I had clearly said to him at the conference that I was not interested in a social relationship. He invites me out to dinner.

The role plays included feedback, modeling and repractice. A continual part of the process was the questioning by the person practicing assertiveness of the other person in the role play about their reactions. It was a major concern within the group that



they be heard clearly and that the other person feel OK. This was expressed in statements such as: "How did you feel when I said that?"; "What did you hear me saying?".

According to the feedback, the predominant verbal behavior which participants needed to work on was withdrawing, either by giving in and letting the other person control the situation or by watering the response down with words like "I guess, I'm kind of, I sort-of". The non-verbal behaviors which were most identified in the feedback included sounding unsure, using a soft voice, over-smiling and a slow response (i.e., letting the other person go on and on before saying anything). Participants identified that when they felt crowded or dominated in a transaction they got confused and couldn't identify what they wanted. The session ended with the group deciding they wanted to continue working on role playing situations from their own experiences rather than have the trainer provide role plays for the next session.

Session 5. Two participants were out sick for Session Five. The three members absent from Session 4 were present for this session.

The trainer began the session by restating the group decision at the conclusion of the previous session to continue role playing specific situations from participant's experience. Approximately five minutes was spent with group members trying unsuccessfully to identify a situation appropriate for role playing. The trainer

then presented a situation from her own experience which was worked on by the group. Members then tried again to come up with specific situations.

Two situations were finally presented to the group. The first involved a complex work conflict situation between the participant and a woman she supervises. The supervisee was described as not working up to expectations with specific examples being given to illustrate. When talked to by the supervisor, she became angry, launched personal attacks, changed the topic, cried, and, at one meeting, walked out.

The supervisor made the following statements about her concerns and feelings in the situation.

I become uncomfortable when she won't understand...I become uncomfortable when there is conflict...It's a win-lose situation...I wonder if I fight, do I have the energy and if I do, will it come out at a good point...It feels like one of us has to lose...I worried about this all weekend...I would like to be able to handle this type of situation without being so upset...I think I was assertive but it didn't work.

The member didn't want to role play any part of the situation. The group discussed with her the dynamics involved and gave her support. There was some modeling of possible ways to handle specifics and at one point some role reversal was used. The discussion lasted forty minutes and was concluded by the group looking at the possible separation which can occur between viewing a conflict in terms of the organizational roles and job requirements and viewing it as an issue between two people (i.e., it is my role as supervisor within

the organization to insure that organizational goals are met, vs. I, as a person, am in a fight with you as a person).

The second situation presented involved, again, a complex set of dynamics between a participant and a person with whom she is living. The protagonist was described as moody, ignoring the participant at significant times, withdrawn and self-castigating when confronted. The participant identified that her personal needs were not getting met, an accumulation of anger had been internalized and that her pattern reflected a predominance of withdrawal and passivity. A specific example from their relationship was selected for roleplay with modeling and feedback.

At the conclusion of this role play, another participant confronted the member involved in the situation with her anger at how long it was taking this member to deal with this person and set the issue straight. The member accepted this statement with "I know." The trainer intervened and modeled an assertive alternative to the accepting statement.

The session ended with a discussion of the changed nature of this session from previous ones. There was general agreement that the content of this evening had focused on more "in-depth" issues (i.e., emotional data) rather than on skills and behaviors. The group, however, was divided on their feelings about this direction continuing. It was decided that members would try to identify specific situations during the coming week for the following session

and see if a combination of "in-depth" and behavior/skills situations could occur which would meet both types of needs.

Session 6. One participant, absent last week was absent again at this session. The session began with a sharing of events of the past week. The trainer described what had occurred as she handled the situation she had role played the previous session. One participant told the group that she had resigned her job. "There was definitely assertiveness involved in terms of going to different people and saying this is how I feel...some of that was scary and I feel that this [training] was helpful...I felt good about it." Another participant described changes which were occurring in a personal relationship. She was not working on directly changing the relationship but felt that because she was being more direct with her anger that it had had a positive effect. She also talked about dealing more directly with a person she was supervising. One member described trying to utilize assertiveness in a staff meeting and ending up really angry with no positive results. She described the director and staff as elitist and judgmental of clients, of other community agencies working with the same clients and of other professionals not holding clinical psychology degrees.

The trainer reminded the group that they had agreed to identify situations during the week which they would like to role play and asked if this was still the direction they were interested in pursuing. Two participants stated they had had difficulty identifying any issues. It was suggested that the group work with the situation

described above by the participant who felt her assertive attempts were unsuccessful. There was general agreement and the group spent the next hour and fifteen minutes on that situation. Due to the complexity of issues involved, there was a great deal of discussion and analysis. Several specific situations were isolated for role playing and the following generalizations emerged.

1. Wanting someone else to change their attitude or value system is not an issue of assertion. The group worked again with the difference between behavior and attitude and how to separate those in a verbal transaction.
2. In working within an organization and trying to effect change, some issues can be dealt with by utilizing assertive behavior and some issues are clearly issues of power.
3. There is value in examining our professional behavior in terms of proactiveness vs. reactiveness. This participant had subtly moved into a reactive stance. Professional leadership involves planning, initiating and strategy.

At the conclusion of that situation, the trainer intervened with:

I'm observing a lot of behavior in the group that is checking out (is it OK if I take this time...Can I go on?). I'm wondering if this process is a type of taking care of each other and assuming we need to do that because others won't initiate for themselves?

Members discussed this issue. Some of the observations made include the following.

"I need to check out because I don't want to be attacked."

"I have a need for approval when I take time on my own ideas."

"Checking out is a protection so no one will get mad or stop me."



"If my needs aren't really urgent, I figure other people's are, so I lay back."

"I don't know if it's appropriate for me to jump in on my own needs."

One participant returned to the intervention the trainer had made in Session 5 which is described above. She talked some about her feelings about what had happened, concluding with her concern which she had not resolved about how to determine when behaving on her own needs was appropriate. There was no closure on this issue.

At the conclusion of the group, members asked the trainer to provide for the next session a structured way to get at the issue of asserting yourself when you think the other person is in a different space and you're concerned about that.

Session 7. Three members were absent from session 7. One of these, who had been absent the previous two times, had decided not to continue the training due to family problems. The session began with the trainer presenting a list of structured role play situations on newsprint. The group was asked to brainstorm additional situations in order to have an extensive list to choose from.

The group spent about fifty minutes developing situations. During this time, there was a great deal of conversation reviewing and analyzing what issues were appropriate for assertion and which were not (i.e., wanting attitude or behavior change; wanting something for yourself or wanting to help someone else). Two questions which the group used to evaluate the appropriateness of assertion were:

"Will assertion accomplish what I want in this situation?" and "Is it worth the energy which would be involved?". The following four situations were finally added to the newsprint.

1. The landlord controls the heat in our apartment.  
Our apartment is too cold.  
I want the heat stabilized.
2. Friends have arranged to come over at 5:30.  
They are always late and I know they won't show up until 6:30.  
I would like them to show up whenever we agree so I don't just hang around waiting.
3. My assistant and I set a deadline for her completing a job (i.e., getting out a newsletter). She agreed that the deadline was realistic.  
She doesn't meet the deadline.  
I want this behavior to change.
4. My lonely piano teacher talks about her personal life through most of my half hour lesson.  
I feel sorry for her, but I want her to stop chatting and teach me piano.

During the development of the role play situations the following observations were made and received support from group members.

"When I am dealing in a threatening situation with no support, I lose touch with what I want and feel."; "It's really upsetting if I feel I'm not being understood"; "Both anger and fear muddle my thinking".

Members then selected situations from the newsprint to role play, with the group and trainer providing modeling and feedback.

The first situation selected involved:

You're having a conversation with person A. Person B walks up and interrupts. You want to continue the conversation without Person B being involved.

This situation was role played with several variations (e.g., you would like to talk to person B at a later time; person B is polite; person B is rude; you can't stand person B and never want to talk with him). The following observations were made.

If the other person really wants something it is harder for me. I tend to give up what I want.

There is value in giving the other person a mixed message. I hope they will respond to the one I really mean so I don't have to be direct.

It's harder to deal assertively in front of a third party. I'm afraid of embarrassing the person I'm being assertive with.

It is harder to be assertive when someone sends covert messages rather than overt messages.

I always wonder how the other person will feel.

There seem to be differences in how a male would interrupt me as a woman than how another woman would interrupt me. I find males are more overt. It also seems to make a difference in the interrupter's style if the person I'm talking with originally is male or female.

Situation two involved the piano teacher described above. The following observations were made.

There is value in planning a specific time to state what I want when I'm involved in a repetitive pattern. If I wait until it happens again to say something, I am really frustrated and am afraid of "over-kill".

Feeling sorry for someone really makes it hard for me to say what I want.

Situation three:

Two weeks ago you agreed to have dinner and spend the evening with someone. In the meantime, you have become aware that you have no desire to develop a relationship with this person. The date you set is for tonight and you want to cancel.

Situation four:

You get a phone call from a friend. S/he wants to come for the weekend to visit you. You want to see this person for a day but not for the entire weekend.

Situation five:

Your assistant has not met the deadline she agreed to. The following observations were made on role play situations three, four and five.

I have the most difficulty when I feel clear and what comes back is indirect and manipulative.

It seems like we are really afraid of acting or sounding angry in any of these situations.

It is very difficult when a series of incidents has built up within a relationship.

Feeling sorry and/or understanding the other person's situation really blocks me from saying what I want.

In role playing these situations we seem to have a tendency to supply options to the other person. It sounds like we have to help them figure out what else they could do in order for us to get what we want. We become responsible for both ourselves and the other person in the situation.

When the role plays concluded, the trainer asked how the group wanted to utilize the final session. The group discussed issues around closure and decided they did not want to "start something" which might not be resolved since it was the final session. There was agreement that members would think about what practice they might want to have "in order to make some skill a little more firm" and that the group wanted to have some social time together. A pizza and beer supper was planned.

Session 8. Eight members were present for the last session. The group spent about an hour discussing the training and the use of assertion, sharing experiences they had had. No one wanted to set up role play situations. The training ended with pizza and beer.

#### POST-SESSION EVALUATION

Each session was evaluated at the conclusion of the session by individual participants on a post-session evaluation form (Appendix E). That data is presented below.

Questions 1 and 2 were designed to evaluate the helpfulness and lack of helpfulness of specifics within each training session (i.e., Question 1 solicited information on the most helpful part of the training and Question 2 asked what was least helpful about the session). The responses to Question 1 indicated four types of activities or elements within the sessions were perceived as helpful: 1) those which increased understanding (i.e., discussions, presentations of conceptual material); 2) dynamics which provided support/validation for individuals (i.e., individual supportive feedback, realizing that others had similar difficulties); 3) structured exercises (i.e., experiences pre-planned by the trainer for group learning); and 4) role playing with modeling and feedback. TABLE I presents the number of responses to each category for each of the sessions.



TABLE I  
MOST HELPFUL ELEMENTS OF TRAINING

INCREASED UNDERSTANDING	1	1	3	2	1	7	0
SUPPORT- VALIDATION	4	0	0	0	3	0	0
STRUCTURED EXERCISES	6	4	0	0	0	0	0
ROLE PLAYING	0	4	3	4	0	0	6
Session	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

The responses to Question 2 (i.e., what was least helpful in the training session) represented five general categories: 1) format of the training session (i.e., the way in which the training occurred); 2) assertion content (i.e., specific material planned to teach assertive behavior); 3) other content (i.e., content within the training session which was either planned or occurred spontaneously to meet other goals such as getting acquainted or group building); 4) trainer behavior; 5) participant behavior. TABLE II presents the number of responses to each of these categories for each of the sessions. A sixth category is included indicating the number of participants who responded that nothing was least helpful.

TABLE II  
LEAST HELPFUL ELEMENTS OF TRAINING

FORMAT	0	0	0	0	1	2	1
ASSERTION CONTENT	2	0	1	0	0	0	1
OTHER CONTENT	7	2	1	1	0	0	0
TRAINER BEHAVIOR	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
PARTICIPANT BEHAVIOR	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
NOTHING	1	7	4	5	4	6	5
Session	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

In Questions 3 and 4, information was solicited on participants' perception of the trainer's behavior during the session. Question 3 asked participants to identify which trainer behaviors either were helpful during the session or would have been helpful for the trainer to include. Question 4 asked participants to rate the extent of helpfulness of the trainer's behavior during the session. There were forty-five responses during the seven weeks which identified specifics of how the trainer was helpful and all of these indicated that there was

enough or the right amount of this behavior on the question asking for rating. Eight responses during the seven weeks identified behaviors which would have been helpful for the trainer to assume to a greater extent. Each of these eight rated the trainer behavior as less than enough.

Six categories emerged in the responses given identifying helpful trainer behavior. 1) Behaviors which validate/support individuals; 2) Facilitating group or individual functioning; 3) teaching of concepts; 4) teaching of behaviors or skills; 5) the trainer's method or style of interacting; and 6) the trainer's method of structuring the group. TABLE III presents the number of responses to each of these categories for each of the sessions. The eight responses which indicated they felt the trainer did not assume these behaviors to a great enough extent are included in the table as the second number under the appropriate session and category (i.e., /1).

In Question 5, participants were asked to describe a critical incident (either positive or negative) which occurred during the session and seemed most important in terms of their increasing their assertion skills. Five categories emerged from the responses. 1) Behaving assertively within the group (i.e., utilizing the learning); 2) learning assertive skills through role play or practice; 3) gaining insight or increasing understanding of self or dynamics; 4) feeling validated; and

TABLE III

HELPFUL TRAINER BEHAVIOR

VALIDATING SUPPORT	1	1	1	0/1	1	0	2
FACILITATING	1	1	0	0	0	0	0
TEACHING CONCEPTS	2	1/1	3	2	0/1	6/2	1
TEACHING SKILLS	0	4	2	5	3/1	0	1/1
METHOD OF INTERACTING	4	0	0	0	0	0	0
METHOD OF STRUCTURING GROUP	1	1	0	0	0/1	0	1
Session	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

5) negative learning experience (i.e., trying a behavior unsuccessfully). TABLE IV presents the number of responses to each of these categories for each session.

In all, there were fifty-three critical incidents described by participants during the seven sessions. When asked to rate the significance of the incident on a five-point scale ranging from not very important to very important (i.e., in terms of individual goals), eighteen participants rated their incident as very important (#5) and four incidents were rated at #1

TABLE IV  
CRITICAL LEARNING INCIDENTS

BEHAVING ASSERTIVELY	4	2	0	3	1	2	0
LEARNING SKILLS	1	8	4	2	0	3	3
GAINING INSIGHT	0	0	0	2	5	3	3
FEELING VALIDATED	4	0	0	0	0	0	0
NEGATIVE EXPERIENCE	1	1	0	0	0	0	1
Session	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

(not very important). The remainder of incidents were rated somewhere in between these two extremes. TABLE V presents the number of incidents rated at each extreme of the continuum according to the type of dynamic which was present in the incident.

TABLE V  
IMPORTANCE OF CRITICAL LEARNING INCIDENTS

	Not Very: #1	Very: #5
BEHAVING ASSERTIVELY	1	1
LEARNING SKILLS	0	7
GAINING INSIGHT	0	8
FEELING VALIDATED	0	1
NEGATIVE EXPERIENCE	3	1



## RECORDER OBSERVATIONS

Participant communication within the group was recorded by observers for two ten-minute periods each session. The number of times each participant spoke was noted. Each verbalization was checked for four non-assertive ways of speaking (i.e., whether, in the observer's opinion, the speaker avoided eye contact; spoke in a soft, hard to hear voice; laughed inappropriately when the content was serious; or spoke in a hesitant manner). Notation was also made of verbal units which were statements of the task or were statements of maintenance of others within the group.

The results of these observations are given in TABLE VI and TABLE VII. TABLE VI presents a summation, for the six sessions in which observation occurred, of the recorded verbalization for each participant. TABLE VII shows the progression from Session 2 through Session 7.

TABLE VI

PARTICIPANT VERBALIZATION:METHOD OF PRESENTATION AND CONTENT

Total Amount for Six Sessions

NUMBER TIMES SPOKE	30	16	19	29	54	23	17	27	2	217
NUMBER SESSIONS ATTENDED	5	6	4	5	6	5	3	5	2	
LACK OF EYE CONTACT	16	3	4	5	14	9	2	3	0	56
HARD TO HEAR	2	5	2	4	9	9	0	4	0	35
INAPPROPRIATE LAUGHTER	9	7	3	6	14	9	7	14	2	71
HESITANT MANNER	11	6	0	2	5	6	4	0	1	35
TASK CONTENT	21	11	10	19	33	12	3	19	1	129
MAINTENANCE CONTENT	3	1	3	9	5	6	0	6	0	33

Participant                      A        B        C        D        E        F        G        H        I        Total

TABLE VII

VERBALIZATIONS WITH RECORDED MANNER OF  
PRESENTATION AND CONTENT:

SESSIONS 2 - 7

NO. PARTICIPANTS PRESENT	9	6	6	7	8	6
NUMBER OF TIMES SPOKE	48	26	36	30	36	41
LACK OF EYE CONTACT	17	7	10	8	2	12
HARD TO HEAR	6	6	5	4	1	13
INAPPROPRIATE LAUGHTER	18	12	17	4	5	15
HESITANT MANNER	7	1	9	5	4	9
TASK CONTENT	2	16	32	22	21	36
MAINTENANCE CONTENT	15	1	4	7	6	0
Session	2	3	4	5	6	7

## JOURNALS

Two final questions on the post-session evaluation forms (Q. 6 & 7) asked participants to plan how they would utilize the training during the week. Within the journals which participants were asked to keep on an on-going basis each week, two questions were developed to solicit information on the results of this post-session planning. There were three other journal questions. The planning from the post-session evaluation and a summary of the data from the journals is presented below.

Part 1. In Question 6 on the post-session evaluation form, participants were asked to state what they hoped to do; planned to do; and were sure they would do, during the coming week as a result of the session. Part 1 of the journal format was designed for participants to record what occurred, during each week, as a result of this planning.

TABLE VIII presents the results of Question 6 and the number of these plans which were written about in the journals. The planning is presented according to what type of content was represented. Three categories of content were used to analyze this data. The first, Self-Validation, includes all responses which indicated wanting self-understanding, self-acceptance or more knowledge or insight into self, others, or

the dynamics of the situation. The second category, Initiating, includes all planning to act in a situation in a proactive manner where there was no reported history (i.e., "I will speak out in the group," "I will give job directions to \_\_\_\_\_"). The third category, Reacting, includes all plans to respond in an assertive manner to an on-going situation which the participant perceived as infringing on her rights. For each category of plans, the number of responses written about in the journals is given under the heading, Reported. The material is presented by sessions.

TABLE VIII

WEEKLY ASSERTION PLANNING  
WITH AMOUNT OF FOLLOW THROUGH

SELF VALIDATION	8	7	6	6	5	7	6	45
REPORTED	5	1	3	3	1	1	1	15
INITIATING	6	5	2	5	4	5	1	28
REPORTED	3	1	2	0	1	3	1	11
REACTING	0	3	2	1	2	0	4	12
REPORTED	0	0	1	1	0	0	3	5
Session	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Total



Part 2. In Question 7 of the post-session evaluation, participants were asked to identify a current situation in which they would like to behave assertively during that week and to describe that situation, including who is involved, what are the issues, what outcomes are hoped for and what plans they have for their behavior.

The second journal question asked participants to record what occurred during the week regarding this planned assertion. TABLE IX presents the results of Question 7 and the journal reporting. The planned assertions are divided into the three categories presented in the conceptual part of the training material (i.e., Self-Validation, Initiating and Reacting). They are further sub-divided according to whether the focus of the planned behavior is personal or professional.

Journal material is reported in TABLE IX in the following manner. 1) Planned assertion was reported in the journal or was not reported; 2) assertion received support from others or was blocked; 3) situation was handled in manner planned or in different manner; and 4) participant reported using a non-assertive style.

Part 3. In Question 3 of the journal, participants were asked to document, during the week, situations in which they were involved where they felt assertive behavior would have



been appropriate for them. They were asked to include both situations where they thought they had acted assertively as well as situations where they did not. A total of fifty-three situations were described.

TABLE X presents a breakdown of the situations recorded by participants according to the following categories: 1) whether within the situation described, the participant wanted to initiate or react to another person's behavior; 2) whether the situation occurred in a professional or a personal context; 3) the behavior which the participant described choosing for herself in that situation (i.e., assertive, non-assertive or mixed); and 4) the participant's reaction to her behavior (i.e., satisfied, not satisfied, or mixed).

Part 4. In the fourth question, participants were asked to document their observations of any changes in the way others were responding to them. A total of forty-one reactions from other people were described during the seven weeks of journal writing. The types of responses experienced and the number within each type which was reported include:

Verbal Aggression: (i.e., descriptions of blaming, labeling and attacking on a verbal level).

5

Non-verbal Aggression: (i.e., behavior such as frowning, sulking, glaring, ignoring what was said and sabotage).

15

Withdrawal which included descriptions of both verbal and non-verbal distancing.

4

TABLE X  
DESCRIBED OPPORTUNITIES FOR  
PARTICIPANT ASSERTIVENESS

	Initiating	Reacting
Number described	20	33
Professional	11	12
Personal	9	21
Assertive	16	15
Non-assertive	2	16
Mixed behavior	2	2
Satisfied	12	13
Not Satisfied	5	16
Mixed reaction	3	4

Verbal Support: (i.e., positive statements about the participant's behavior).

10

Non-verbal Support: (i.e., cooperative behavior from others).

7

Part 5. In Question 5, participants were asked to record what occurred during each week which either supported or blocked their change toward more assertive behavior. Responses from all participants for the seven week period are combined and reported below in TABLE XI.

Both supports and blocks to assertion are divided according to whether they were reported as originating within

the participant (From Self); within another person and directed toward the participant (From Others); or were dynamics of the situation or factors within the environment (From Situation).

Support from Self is further divided into the number of responses which indicated that awareness or understanding of self, others or the dynamics of the situation was the primary support (Understanding) or whether the support was perceived as experiencing self-acceptance (Self-validation). Support from others is subdivided to indicate the number of responses reported which were Verbal and Non-verbal.

Reported blocks from Self include a breakdown of the number of responses indicating that experiencing either Guilt or Fear of another's supposed reaction was the block and the number which indicated negative feelings about self was the primary block to assertion (Self). Blocks from others are reported as Verbal aggression, Non-verbal aggression, and Withdrawal.

Summary. In summary, participants described thirty-seven things which they had tried which related to hopes and plans recorded at the end of each session. They felt successful on thirty-one of these items and felt they had increased their self-understanding as a result of twelve of the plans.

In Part 2, participants documented what had occurred regarding specific situations in which they had identified



TABLE XI  
SUPPORTS AND BLOCKS TO ASSERTIVE BEHAVIOR

SUPPORTS		BLOCKS	
From Self	12	26	
<u>Understanding</u>	4	<u>Guilt/Fear</u>	9
<u>Self-validation</u>	8	<u>Self</u>	17
From Others	37	17	
<u>Verbal</u>	22	<u>Verbal Aggression</u>	5
<u>Non-verbal</u>	15	<u>Non-verbal Aggression</u>	7
		<u>Withdrawal</u>	5
From Situation	3	3	

they wanted to behave assertively. Fifty-one situations were originally identified and thirty-one of these were documented in the journals. Of the thirty-one responses described, participants identified they behaved assertively in twenty-two.

Participants identified, during the seven weeks, fifty-three situations where assertive behavior on their part was judged appropriate. Twenty of those situations involved initiating behavior and thirty-three were characterized by a need to respond to someone else. Of the former, sixteen reported they were assertive while fifteen viewed their

behavior as assertive in the latter category. A total of twenty-five participants reported they felt positively about their behavior and the outcome.

Participants described twenty-four negative reactions from others to their assertive behavior and seventeen positive reactions. There were fifty-two examples given of supports for change. Twelve were self-given; thirty-seven came from others and three from the situation. Fifty-six examples of blocks to change were described of which twenty-six were from self, seventeen from others and three from the situation.

#### POST-INTERVIEW

The post-interview was designed to secure information on 1) how participants perceived their own behavior after the completion of the training program; 2) what specific applicability, benefits and limits do participants feel there are in utilizing assertive behaviors; 3) what factors supported and blocked their change toward assertive behavior; and 4) what were the helpful and non-helpful aspects of the training program.

Within this section, the data from the post-interview is presented. In some cases, the post-interview questions were designed to solicit the same type of information that was solicited during the pre-interview. When this occurs, the data from both interviews is presented for comparison.

How participants view their own behavior. Five questions were designed to solicit information regarding how each participant viewed her own behavior at the conclusion of the training (Questions 1,3,4,5,6). In Question 1, the identical series of ten professional non-support situations which were proposed in the pre-interview were presented again. Participants were asked to state how they would respond in each situation.

These responses were grouped according to whether the participant responded directly to the hypothetical person in each situation or chose an indirect response as well as whether her response was a statement or a question. In TABLE XII, a comparison between the pre-interview and post-interview responses is presented.

TABLE XII

TYPES OF RESPONSES IN PROFESSIONAL NON-SUPPORT SITUATIONS

	Number of Responses Pre-Interview	Number of Responses Post-Interview
Responded Directly	44	67
Responded Indirectly	47	23
Statement Response	31	71
Question Response	26	19

In Question 3, participants were asked whether they felt their assertive behavior had increased, as a result of the training program, in certain categories (i.e., the question was worded as a forced choice between options). The same forced choice categories were presented in the pre-interview to solicit information about where the participant saw herself functioning more assertively prior to training. TABLE XIII reports the number of participants who felt they had increased their assertiveness in areas where they previously perceived themselves as more assertive (i.e., the Strength area) and the number who felt they had increased their assertiveness in areas where they perceived themselves as less assertive (i.e., the Non-strength area).

In Questions 4 and 5, a six point scale was used and each woman was asked to rate herself in terms of her professional behavior at the present time and prior to the training program (i.e., #1 representing highly assertive to #6 representing not at all assertive). In the pre-interview, the same scale was used to solicit information on where women viewed their assertive behavior a year before and immediately prior to training. TABLE XIV presents the amount of increase that the participants felt had occurred during training.

TABLE XIII

AREAS OF INCREASED ASSERTIVENESS

Category	Pre-Interview Strength	Post-Interview Strength	Increased Strength	Increased Non- strength
One to one	6	6	4	2
Group	4	3	2	1
Known people	6	7	5	2
Strangers	4	2	2	0
Males	2	5	1	4
Females	8	4	3	1
Personal	5	5	3	2
Professional	5	4	3	1
Equal rank Organizationally	8	5	4	1
Lower rank Organizationally	2	2	0	2
Higher rank Organizationally	0	2	0	2



TABLE XIV

INCREASE IN ASSERTIVENESS DURING TRAINING

None	One Point	Two Points	Three or More Points
0	6	3	0

In Question 6, participants were read their list of problem areas which they had identified as wanting to learn to handle more assertively in the pre-interview. Each participant was asked to rate each problem according to the amount of progress she felt she had made in that area (i.e., C = I am now completely assertive; M = I am more assertive than before but still have work to do and D = I didn't improve at all). There were no C responses and 1 D response (i.e., in groups). All other responses were rated M. There were nineteen problems originally identified which received an M response. These are grouped in two ways in TABLE XV. I. divides the problems between those in a Professional setting, a Personal setting or with types of interactions common to Both professional and personal. II. reports the number of responses indicating improved skill at handling Authority situations and situations with dependent or lesser status individuals. Some responses did not reflect either an authority or dependency dynamic and are reported under Not Specified.

TABLE XV

AREAS OF INCREASED ASSERTIVENESS

I.	Professional 5	Personal 4	Both 10
II.	Authority 9	Dependent 6	Not Specified 4

Applicability, benefits and limits of assertive behavior.

Four questions (7,8,12,13) were designed to secure information on participants' perceptions of the applicability, benefits and limits of assertive behavior for themselves. In Question 7, participants were asked about areas where they would like to be less assertive than they presently perceived themselves to be. TABLE XVI compares the responses to this question on the pre-interview with the responses identified in the post-interview.

TABLE XVI

AREAS WHERE DECREASED ASSERTION IS DESIRED

Area	Pre-Interview	Post-Interview
Professional	1	0
Personal	1	3
Authority Persons	0	0
Dependent Persons	2	1
No decrease desired	6	6

The content reflected in the Personal area included "with a male" on both the pre-interview and the post-interview. In addition, on the post-interview, children were added to the list. Both examples given for dependent persons on the pre-interview described passive and confused people. On the post-interview, these were not present and children were identified.

In Question 8, participants were asked about areas where they perceived themselves as non-assertive but had no desire to change. TABLE XVII reports the responses given on both the pre-interview and the post-interview.

TABLE XVII

AREAS WHERE NON-ASSERTION IS DESIRED

Area	Pre-Interview	Post-Interview
Professional	1	0
Personal	6	2
Authority Situations	2	0
Dependency Situations	1	1
Situations with no support	0	2
Irrelevant Situations	1	2
No areas	2	3

In Question 12, participants were asked to describe what had been the best consequence of the assertive behavior which

they had tried as a result of the training. The corresponding question on the pre-interview asked participants to predict what would be the best consequence of behaving more assertively. Question 13 asked for the worst consequence. The results are reported in TABLE XVIII and TABLE XIX.

TABLE XVIII

BEST CONSEQUENCES OF INCREASED ASSERTIVENESS

	Pre-Interview Predicted	Post-Interview Described
Increase in skills	6	2
Increase in positive self-esteem	19	16
Improved response from others	3	3
Increase in professional effectiveness	6	2
Improved relationships	1	10

TABLE XIX

WORST CONSEQUENCE OF INCREASED ASSERTIVENESS

	Pre-Interview Predicted	Post-Interview Described
Lose interpersonal skills	4	0
Loss in self-esteem	3	0
Negative response from others	16	8
Decrease in professional effectiveness	2	0
Harmful to relationships	5	0

The remaining questions on the post-interview (16-20) were designed exclusively as post training evaluation and have no direct counterpart on the pre-interview.

Factors supporting and blocking change. Questions 16 and 17 were designed to gain information about factors which supported and blocked behavioral change. In each question, participants were asked to rate five items according to the following scale:

- 1 very significant (help/block) to me
- 2 somewhat (helpful/blocking) to me
- 3 didn't occur or didn't matter to me.

Participant responses are presented in TABLE XX.

Helpful and non-helpful aspects of the training program.

In the final three questions, participants were asked to evaluate the training program. Question 18 was developed to ask what was most helpful and Question 19 solicited what was not helpful and might be eliminated. TABLE XXI presents a summary of the responses to those questions.

The specific techniques identified as most helpful in increasing skills in assertion included role playing and feedback which resulted in behavioral change. The least helpful techniques included: 1) the initial exercise on Validation; 2) the utilization of structured exercises only during the initial sessions instead of spaced throughout the training; and



TABLE XX

FACTORS SUPPORTING AND BLOCKING CHANGE

Supportive	Blocking
a colleague's encouragement very significant 4 somewhat a help 4 didn't occur/matter 1	a colleague's reaction very significant 0 somewhat a block 4 didn't occur/matter 5
close friend's encouragement very significant 6 somewhat a help 3 didn't occur/matter 0	close friend's reaction very significant 0 somewhat a block 5 didn't occur/matter 4
positive feedback on changes in my behavior very significant 4 somewhat a help 4 didn't occur/matter 1	negative feedback on changes in my behavior very significant 1 somewhat a block 2 didn't occur/matter 6
my own writing/thinking very significant 6 somewhat a help 2 didn't occur/matter 1	my own writing/thinking very significant 0 somewhat a block 5 didn't occur/matter 4
the group very significant 3 somewhat a help 5 didn't occur/matter 1	the group very significant 1 somewhat a block 3 didn't occur/matter 5

3) the lack of a format or structure to teach people to create simple role plays.

The elements within the group which were designated as most helpful included the support and modeling available in

TABLE XXI

MOST AND LEAST HELPFUL ELEMENTS OF THE TRAINING

	Most	Least
Specific techniques designed to increase skills in assertion	3	7
Discussion and interaction designed to increase insight/understanding	10	0
Structure of the group	4	3
Trainer style and behavior	3	1
Record keeping	0	7

an all female group. Least helpful elements of group structure were identified as too short a time period and a lack of balance among group members in terms of backgrounds which limited group support.

The final question (Question 20) asked what might be added to this type of training in the future. There were three responses to this question, all of which cited the need to create a more homogeneous group through screening.

## SUMMARY

This Chapter described an eight-week assertion training program for professional women. Results of the pre/post interviews were presented. Data from the post-session evaluation forms,

the observation of recorders and the on-going journals of participants have been reported. Chapter V will present an analysis of this data.

## CHAPTER V

## DISCUSSION

This study was designed to provide additional information on what professional women are doing and what they need. Specifically, the study focused on the area of task-leadership skills (i.e., the ability to initiate, respond directly and function in a proactive manner). A training program in assertion skills for professional women was developed and implemented in order to develop a case study which would describe:

1. In what types of situations do professional women experience the need to be more assertive?
2. What factors support and block assertive behavior for professional women?
3. What values and goals do women hold regarding the appropriateness of various behaviors within a professional setting?
4. In what ways was this training model helpful and where does it need refinement?

Types of Situations. Both the appropriateness of assertive functioning and the need to develop additional assertive skills was identified in a wide variety of types of situations. Other people's behavior which elicits the need to respond assertively included: others who have more role or personal power; people who demonstrate lack of sensitivity to the woman's rights; and those who are viewed, by the woman, as victims or functioning in a powerless manner.

The category of people with more power included individuals within the agency with more organizational power (i.e., boss, supervisor, Board Chairperson); individuals with cultural or community power who could effect the agency or the woman (i.e., the Superintendent of Schools, a local psychiatrist); and those who were experienced as more generally or personally powerful. This latter group included males.

The data indicated that this group of women were not interested in continuing an unquestioned acceptance of authoritarian decision making or behavior. Authoritarianism, whether it was delivered in a benevolent, hostile or detached fashion, was questioned when it appeared to interfere with getting the organizational work done, to be the wrong decision, or to ignore a person's feelings.

Most organizations, however, are still structured on a hierarchical model with power unevenly distributed. The concept of management itself, as a separate profession, evolved from the idea that decision making for the organization better resided with a few who could direct the work of the many. Within most organizations, the management subgroup both represents the more powerful, directing group for the total organization and has, itself, developed an internal hierarchy of lines of authority and power. This traditional hierarchical model has survived through the support of all involved. There exists an organizational



norm that lines of authority and unequal power distribution relative to decision making are necessary for organizational survival.

The review of the literature indicated that the necessity for this hierarchical model is being questioned from many sources. This study indicates that women are one of the groups who are questioning this structure. It appears, from the data, that what women have to offer in evaluating "what now is" in order to evolve "what can be" is an understanding of where acceptance of this norm of decision making through role power is dysfunctional and the suggestion of some different criteria for making decisions other than automatically relegating this task to those with the assigned/assumed power. Thus, these women have concluded that they need to learn personally how to function more assertively in order to more effectively challenge this norm.

A second type of behavior from others was identified as arousing the need for assertive behavior was the lack of sensitivity or invasion of the woman's rights by another person. Women described this occurring in ways which were both overt (i.e., blocking, open disagreement) and covert (i.e., not being given relevant information). Invasion of their rights was reported as occurring, at times, with direct anger but more frequently in a non-emotional way (i.e., having decisions changed, time and property invaded and opinions ignored).

Since, for such a long time, women as a group have colluded in the assumption that they don't matter compared to men, it is easy to understand the role-conditioned history of this behavior. It is possible to postulate that, as women accept their competence and professional worth and communicate this with organizations, male behavior will change. It is equally easy, however, to hypothesize that, as women behave more assertively around their rights to function professionally in an egalitarian manner, the resistance will increase and possibly become more overt (i.e., direct blocking rather than ignoring will become the norm). There is support for either hypothesis within the literature and insufficient data from professional women within organizations to provide a definitive description at this time.

Within this study, the participants reported a delay (of several hours to days) in recognition that their rights had been negated or that they had been treated unfairly. This was especially true if the infringement was covert or fit into a pattern of "how things have always been done". Once the recognition occurred, anger was reported. The focused need for assertive skills development was for behaviors which could be used to stop this infringement from occurring again or continuing. The literature reviewed in Chapter II substantiates that a pattern of mutual collusion exists which supports the unequal

sex role pattern and that recognition on the part of women normally produces anger. The data from this study indicated that women first needed the recognition within a specific context (i.e., an example which involved them from which to generalize), and then wanted skills to change the pattern of interaction.

The third type of behavior from others, which women identified needing more assertion skills to respond to, was behavior which communicated the other person had less power. Included in this group were children, supervisees, clients, and people who were passive, hurt and confused. Clearly this is the conglomerate which represents the invitation to nurturing. While nurturing, as a conditioned and expected behavior from women, has produced a sensitivity to others, a concern and caring for people in need and multi-skills at behaving in caring ways, it has also had its negative aspects. The conditioned nurturing trait has been the channel used (by both men and women) to narrow women's view of the world and appropriate work and to make illegitimate a woman's needs when they conflicted with another's. Thus it would appear logical that this type of behavior would be identified as an area for developing assertiveness while at the same time, attempting assertiveness in these situations would produce the most conflict and guilt. The data substantiated that this was true.

There were similarities in the specific examples described by these women and presented to the group. Eight general areas emerged, reflecting the types of situations where assertive skills were viewed as needed. These are presented below with examples.

- 1. Experiencing a lack of professional equality. Women described a lack of inclusion with the professional staff, difficulty getting "air-time" in meetings, having their statements or opinions ignored, experiencing an unclearness of roles and role expectations and being excluded from both planning and decision making.
- 2. Having time or property invaded/used by colleagues. Specific examples given here included colleagues who dominate the conversation, interrupt her work, monopolize meetings, consistently arrive late, use personal office supplies/desk/phone without asking, plan work which will include her without involving her in the process and present/claim or take credit for work which she has done.

Both of these areas exemplify how women are being treated as "less" within organizational structures. While the role-conditioned history certainly contributes to this dynamic, the review of the literature discussed in Chapter II identified other dynamics which can be considered as contributing factors in reaching an understanding of what is happening, including

the recentness of women's advent into the field of management, the small numbers of women proportionately within the field; and the fact that many women start in management at a later age and have frequently not had specific training in administration.

While the data from this study indicates that women are willing to invest time and energy to learn ways to both stop their collusion in this dynamic and limit the reoccurrence of this behavior from others, there are additional questions, which this study did not deal with, which need to be raised. Examples would include: What has happened within this culture to produce this lack of sensitivity? How do those currently functioning with organizational/professional power suggest this dynamic can change? What, within organizations, creates an environment where lack of sensitivity and invasion of rights is either possible or perhaps necessary?

What is being suggested here is that this is a dynamic involving more than professional women. Professional men and the organizations themselves are also involved and stand to gain from a change. It is the responsibility of the total system to define the problem, delineate the questions and propose solutions. Anything short of that risks producing modifications, individual solutions or shifts in power rather than basic change.



3. Needing to give "corrective" feedback to a staff member.

The primary examples within this category involved working as a supervisor to a staff member whose job performance was unacceptable (i.e., records were inadequate, approaches, management style or specific manner of doing a task was below standard, staff member had high absenteeism, forgot appointments or had mannerisms which were counter to organizational policy or alienating to clients). A second example was the need to remove a staff member from a specific project.

4. Fulfilling specific tasks within the job. Identified here were: directing staff members, being clear about expectations, leading groups, initiating the giving of a professional opinion in a staff meeting, keeping a group discussion on topic, firing a staff member, and giving directions to a committee or board.

5. Setting reasonable limits when the other person asks for or expects more than you want to do. Included here were: being bothered/pestered by colleague, having a client ask for a personal favor, having a client ask for fee reduction, being asked to nurture, being asked for social contact, and being asked to do extra or unreasonable work.

6. Initiating for self-interest. Within this category were situations involving money, including asking for a raise or for

a specific salary when interviewing for a job. Asking a colleague for professional favors, asking for a promotion and terminating phone conversations were also included.

Within these last four areas, the women within the group were identifying more specifically, areas where proactive behaviors are viewed as appropriate but difficult. Certainly being proactive is itself a violation of the female sex-role conditioning of reactiveness. Other female conditioned traits are involved in this list, however. Giving corrective feedback to another adult is in conflict with nurturing. Asking for what you want is opposite to waiting until someone offers. The data indicates that women want to change these aspects of the cultural conditioning which are interfering with their professional functioning. Some factors make this difficult. Women lack experience in proactive behaviors which men have had the opportunity to practice and internalize. There is an organizational scarcity of both female role models who could demonstrate this type of functioning and support for becoming involved in a learning process. In addition, many of these issues also raise value questions for women since much modeling which they have experienced organizationally of setting limits, giving "corrective" feedback and initiating for self-interest has occurred in a context of non-concern for whoever else was involved (i.e., in a hostile, aggressive, or demeaning manner

which elevated production as a value at the expense of persons). The data clearly indicates that women reject this latter form of behavior. Women are exploring to find ways to behave organizationally which will combine proactiveness with concern and respect for others.

7. Initiating when the issue is confused or emotions are strong.

The group identified dealing with staff resistances, responding to double messages, getting the job done when staff have personal problems and getting the job done when staff are involved in interpersonal conflict.

8. Responding to direct and indirect aggression and anger.

Participants described supervisees resisting feedback, colleagues avoiding a meeting, clients expressing anger, being patronized and being manipulated as well as direct attack.

The issues involved here are complex. Woman's history has focused her on the subjective, the emotional and the interpersonal. Women have skills within this area which are necessary within organizations that have gone too far in the direction of the objective and rational, leaving employees fragmented and alienated. However, these are not the only skills which women have. Women also have skills involving logic, planning and abstracting. Given the history of prejudice and stereotyping, there is a danger for women that exhibiting any behaviors which

could trigger a stereotype will produce labeling (i.e., she's just being an emotional woman) and will block her being perceived in any other manner.

There is also a danger that women could become locked into the traditional female sex-role within the organizational structure. This repetition of the cultural pattern would assign "her" responsibility for the emotional/subjective dynamics of the organization while "he" continued with the rational/objective work. The data clearly indicates that professional women reject this continuation of polarized behavior as a goal for themselves.

It is also still unclear how widespread an acceptance exists within organizations of the validity of any emotions. While the literature has suggested that there is a growing recognition of the negative effects of a fragmented view of human behavior, there is no indication that this recognition is in anything but the beginning stages. This leaves women in the position of having the understanding which the organizational culture may not be ready for.

Thus there is a great deal of vulnerability represented in this area. Dealing with emotions can be a vulnerable place to be at best since this represents a lowering of defenses. To risk this in an antagonistic and hostile environment is to propose that women should be willing to become victims for the future health of the organization. Perhaps organizations need

to consider how, if they are interested in moving toward "human wholeness", they can provide a non-toxic environment so that women's skills in this area may be utilized.

Characteristic of the types of situations identified above was the consistent theme of mutual respect and mutual responsibility. These women consistently identified wanting to be more assertive in areas where they were aware of inequalities, unfairness and lack of responsibility. There were no situations identified where assertive skills were seen as techniques which could be used to manipulate or "put-down" another person or gain unreasonable power advantages.

There is, however, a general theme which characterized the situations identified by these women and exemplified in the wide range of types of experiences described as "problem" areas. These women report a general behavior pattern of reaction, frequent withdrawal and low visibility in a manner which avoids conflict. Certainly a strong case can be made for these behaviors being a result of the internalization of the sex-role conditioning and therefore, sex-linked attributes. However, these areas have been self-identified by professional women as areas they feel are legitimate foci for change and in which they have enough personal investment in changing to devote time and energy to a training program.



This fact adds weight to considering that the behaviors these women are describing have developed as realistic responses to the kinds of opportunities and limits which organizational structures have provided to women. To attempt to provide professional leadership within a structure which is both alien in values and attributes and formally, informally, and statistically discriminatory may be inviting this type of accommodation. Certainly this second explanation needs much more serious consideration than it has been given to date, both by behavioral scientists and by organizations.

Factors supporting and blocking assertive behaviors.

The major source of support for the participants' assertiveness came from others. Women described other people providing both direct verbal support and non-verbal supportive responses. This latter included responding to the woman in a different manner such as being more open or friendly when she acted assertively and serving as a model by being comfortably assertive themselves.

Less frequently were participants able to provide support for themselves for behaving in an assertive manner. When this occurred it included "remembering/thinking about my rights and using my anger when they were infringed on" and "taking time to think through the dynamics of what is happening". Participants also reported that it was easier to be more assertive when they were able to feel positive about themselves.

The data, therefore, confirms findings within the literature that the different sex-role conditioning of males and females has produced differences in motivation. Affiliation and achievement were linked as support factors while external rewards (i.e., task accomplishment) although they occurred frequently, were not reported as important support factors.

It is clear that this data raises more questions than it answers. When women are looking for support from affiliation, for example, it is unclear whether they are saying that they are unable to function assertively without that support or unwilling to defend and become isolated and fragmented. While both positions may originate in the conditioning, the first is a statement of fear and lack of strength while the second is a statement of valuing "wholeness".

Questions can also be raised regarding the timing of support from others. It might be possible that, since women are relatively new to organizational management, they may need support for proactiveness only in the initial stages of their functioning. Once security is established, both internally and externally, it is possible that the need for a personalized support within relationships may either diminish or change in its characteristics.

It would also seem that there is a connection between an increased need for support from others and the reality of being

treated as "less". Since sexism is often covert and subtle, women who experience this may need overt reassurances. As women become more aware of the reality of this covert message, it is possible that they will feel less as if they had done something wrong or were in some way personally vulnerable and a shift in the desired support mechanisms will result.

Thus, although this data confirms other data reported in the literature that affiliation and achievement are linked for women, more study needs to occur regarding both the meaning of this, as well as what external factors impact on its continuance and/or change.

Supportive and blocking behaviors may be linked to each other. The absence of an identified support can become a block and vice versa. In understanding this data, it is helpful to consider it both in terms of the originating source and the specific behavior/attitude conveyed and highlight what connections exist in each area between supports and blocks.

While the predominant source of support was from others, the predominant blocking to assertiveness came from the woman herself. In describing how they blocked themselves, however, the data indicated that the women were assuming reactions from others (i.e., disappointment, hurt, judgment, rejection or anger). Thus, women withdrew most frequently into traditional

behaviors when their perception was that assertiveness would produce an unwanted reaction from another.

There was no data to indicate whether this self-blocking occurred more frequently in an automatic way in response to female conditioning or as a response to perceived covert messages sent by the other person. The literature would suggest that both stimuli could be present.

Women did report that there were times, however, when they felt blocked by others' behavior. The two types of behaviors emanating from others which were most consistently blocking were withdrawal from the relationship and moving into a passive and reactive position. Actual withdrawal, although effective as a block when fantasized or projected ahead of time, functioned in reality as a block only when the continuation of the relationship mattered. In other instances, where the person's opinion or company was not valued, withdrawal was inconsequential.

Passive and reactive behavior from another in reaction to assertiveness, however, was a consistent block which either stopped or slowed down the woman's behavior each time it occurred. Being hurt, sulking, looking sad, being depressed or talking about how terrible he was as a person or how many problems he had, were all types of passive behaviors described as effectively stopping the woman from stating what she wanted or thought. Although in role play situations, women identified fearing this

type of indirect anger about equally from males and females, in the journal reporting there was only one example given of a woman responding in this manner. All other indirect responses were from males.

As previously reported in the review of the literature, an underlying dynamic involved in change for women is power. Passive and reactive behavior in response to assertiveness proved to be an effective move to retain or regain the power (i.e., block proactiveness which redistributes power) since it simultaneously triggered guilt over breaking expected female behaviors; invited nurturing; and was covert in nature and hence made cognitively unavailable what was really occurring. The data indicated that women needed to first understand this dynamic before they were able to practice assertive behaviors which would stop this passive blocking.

In considering the content of the reported self-blocking, which predominantly focused on an assumption of other's reactions, the issue emerges of women's personal safety to function.

The data indicated that women are experiencing a vulnerability, both in terms of how others will react/ behave toward them and in how they are perceived. There was frequent concern expressed that it was unsafe to show confusion, unclearness or strong, non-controlled emotions and a high degree of self-anger or self-frustration when confusion occurred. Women feared



others' perceptions and subsequent reactions when they became confused.

This tendency toward perfectionism and rejection of emotionalism in favor of absolute rationality reflects the pressures of the male managerial model. Not making any mistakes, being completely clear and sure of dynamics and not experiencing any strong emotions which could confuse the issue represents a way to be safe enough to persevere with no or conditional support since it provides a personal "distancing" within the work setting.

One thing which is being said here is that women report they are still being judged for who they are. This, within the organizational world, reflects another continuation of the double standard since men are professionally judged for what they do.

Another factor within this dynamic, however, needs to be highlighted. The pressures which women are experiencing are to function according to the elements involved in the old concept of managerial rationality which is still operating as an organizational norm. This "ideal" of absolute rationality, although identified by behavioral scientists as alienating and ineffective in human terms, remains largely unquestioned within organizational practice. This places women in a very difficult position since they are organizationally functioning among the "least powerful". To function within and accept this organizational norm, therefore, places them in the position of

perpetuating an unsuccessful model which is personally alienating. On the other hand, to refuse to function within the norm invites alienation. The reality of this type of bind which professional women face makes more understandable the need of support which women express.

It was also clear from the data that a major dynamic blocking these women from feeling supportive about their own proactive behavior was an absence of understanding of what their rights as individuals and professionals were in any situation. Once these issues became clear, women were able to function differently with only the normal amount of difficulty which any change implies. Training for women, therefore, needs to consider ways to incorporate the understanding of individual rights as a primary objective.

Much self-blocking which women reported related to fear (of failing, of hurting others). While it is possible that this may be another internalization of sex-role conditioning, there are other ways this dynamic should be considered. Power and status are strong factors in determining behavior in all groups, organizations notwithstanding; and within organizations, power and status are still within the providence of the male culture. More consideration needs to be given to the real sanctions which are present for professional women who function in non-traditional ways in order to provide skills/support for alternative ways of self-protection.

What values and goals do women hold regarding the appropriateness of various behaviors within a professional setting?

Since there is no agreement within the literature regarding what constitutes assertive behaviors (i.e., what differences exist, if any, between assertion, aggression and manipulation), a third purpose of this study was to provide information of a descriptive nature regarding what behaviors women consider appropriate aspects of assertiveness.

The data indicated that at no point did women describe either aggression or manipulation as appropriate behaviors. There were no examples of wanting to "put someone else down", make someone else feel bad or gain power to the detriment of someone else. Assertiveness was deemed appropriate when its absence would be negating to one or both of the persons involved. Thus, for this group of women, assertiveness was viewed as a way of increasing individual feelings of self-worth and not as a technique to gain power over another person.

What was described in the examples of satisfactory assertiveness was communication which was:

brief

"There is no need to explain and convince."

direct

"Beating around the bush only confuses things."

stayed on the issue

"It's clearer when I keep the focus."

descriptive in nature

"Evaluating or judging others or myself makes things worse."

expressed the speaker's position

"I just need to say clearly what I want or think."

The women also talked and wrote extensively about anger. In the process of working for self-understanding, for example, women examined their feelings as they found themselves withdrawing and discovered they were angry about what the other person had done or said. Thus, another goal of behavior was to respond more immediately to a situation in order to prevent the anger from either turning inward or building to the point it felt out of control. This meant that increasing the amount of recognition of the specifics of organizational sexism became a crucial need before assertive behaviors could become more immediate.

In addition, both the recorders in their observations and the participants through the use of the feedback checklist also identified the need for developing more assertive non-verbal behaviors. The recorders observed the presence of all four of the identified non-assertive behaviors (i.e., inappropriate laughter; lack of eye contact; quiet, hard to hear voice; and a hesitant manner of speaking). There was consensus among the participants that non-verbally looking and sounding in ways

which were congruent with the content and intent of the verbal message were important behaviors.

Within the role play situations during the training sessions, participants continually evaluated the effectiveness of the role-playing in terms of how a given behavior made them feel and how the "other" within the role play felt. The search was for ways of behaving which would enhance, wherever possible, both persons within the relationship. One of the learnings which emerged from the training was that clarity and directness could be mutually freeing while protection could be mutually binding. Thus, while behaviors leading toward a goal of respect for all persons changed during the training, the goals of respect for individual integrity remained constant.

It is worthwhile to examine this dynamic of concern for others and the realization that directness was mutually freeing in terms of both female conditioning and organizational functioning. Traditionally the female sex-role conditioning has supported indirectness and "tactfulness" as methods for women to show appropriate concern for others. The subtly involved has been that this also communicated deference and, through unclarity, protected the woman from possible resulting anger. For women to risk changing to a direct statement within a potential conflict situation, therefore, involves risking engendering anger from another in exchange for gaining self-integrity. The data



change; in understanding and dealing with anger; and in increasing their awareness of their personal/professional rights. Training for women needs to combine this understanding on both the cognitive and emotional level with behavioral practice.

6. As both behavioral scientists and organizational staff consider changes in organizational structuring away from traditional hierarchical models, ways need to be found to incorporate the insights which women bring. Implicit here is that women need to be included equally during the entire process of change.

7. Women's concerns and insight into the personal and emotional aspects of human functioning are necessary and valuable to the present-day fragmented and alienated organization. Organizations must discover ways in which women can provide organizational direction in this area without limiting them to only this role and negating other types of leadership which they are equally qualified to provide.

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indicated that women, as they experienced this type of directness, found they were able to handle the resulting anger and that the anger was much less immobilizing and emotionally debilitating to the other person than were other possible reactions such as confusion or guilt.

In applying this organizationally, the data indicated that assertiveness represented one way in which women could implement within their professional lives, their value of respect and concern without applying what, for this group of women, were some less helpful traditional nurturing behaviors.

In what ways was this training model helpful and where does it need refinement? As was indicated in the review of the literature, assertion training is based on a theory that teaching new behaviors will result in changes in self-perception. In this way, it differs radically from other therapeutic approaches which focus on beginning with insight and understanding to produce change. The data indicated that this group of women linked behavior practice and insight.

In order to learn and change, these women needed, wanted and valued an approach which allowed exploration of emotions; use of logic and cognition; and provided opportunity to see and practice behavioral alternatives. The data indicated that this type of assertion training for women can provide both the structure necessary to understand the internalization of the

conditioning and its organizational application in the form of sexism and a behavioral forum to supplement the scarcity of professional female models within organizations.

The covert nature of organizational sexism; the female sex-role conditioning which teaches personalization; and the cultural structure which has separated women all collude in keeping women individually powerless and reactive. To effect change in that dynamic, as was indicated in the review of the literature, understanding, generalization, and connection with others are necessary ingredients. The data indicated that both working for insight and understanding and training in a group with other women who are experiencing similar dynamics provided the necessary support system for change. An approach which allows only behavioral practice ignores the nature of female sex-role conditioning.

This study substantiated that assertion training is more effective when behavioral practice is combined with modeling and feedback. In view of the paucity of professional women within organizations, this approach to training provides for women a specific experience of assertive behaviors which, the data indicated, was necessary to the learning process in the absence of other role models.

This training model combined a structured format with a flexible, open-ended approach. Structure was provided through

the use of reading material; during initial sessions in the form of specific preplanned experiences as well as through an initial directive or high task leadership style on the part of the trainer. Flexibility was present increasingly during the eight weeks as participants determined both the learning rate and the specific content for role play. The data indicated that the balance between openness and structure was helpful and should be increased (i.e., structured experiences should be included for part of each session rather than most of only the initial sessions). There was also an indication from the data that more direct information should be provided on the nature of organizational sexism.

#### SUMMARY

The purpose of this study was to describe the implementation and evaluation of an assertion training program for professional women in order to provide information regarding: the areas of need for increased assertiveness; the factors supporting and blocking assertive behaviors; and the types of behaviors to which professional women aspire. Additionally, the study was designed to provide participant feedback on the helpfulness and need for change of this particular training model.

A review of the literature substantiated that women face both external and internal barriers to their professional functioning as a result of sex-role conditioning. The literature indicated that assertion training is effective in helping individuals learn previously unknown behaviors. There was little information, however, regarding how assertion training relates to the specific needs of women as a group or of women functioning professionally within organizations.

This study, therefore, was designed to provide additional information on what professional women are doing and what they need. Specifically, the study focused on the area of task-leadership skills (i.e., the ability to initiate, respond directly and function in a proactive manner).

Ten women, functioning as professionals within human service agencies, attended an eight week assertion training program which was designed to teach basic concepts and skills of assertive behaviors. Observation and interview were used to collect information on the women's experiences and views of both the training process and the applicability of assertive behaviors within the professional settings in which they worked.

Observation was done by participants through post-session evaluation, participant feedback, and on-going journals. Observation by recorders included elements of the method and



content of participants' communication during the training sessions. Systematic observation was also made by the trainer in the recording of the content of each training session. Interviews were held individually prior to and at the conclusion of the training.

Results of the study were presented in Chapter IV. Within Chapter V, the following data was discussed: specific types of situations where professional women experienced the need to be more assertive; factors which served to support and block women's assertive behavior within a professional setting; the types of behaviors which these women viewed as appropriate within the context of professional relationships; and the elements within this particular assertion training model which were helpful and non-helpful to the participants.

The data indicated that professional women frequently function reactively rather than proactively; are relationship oriented; value their own and other's self-worth; and are frequently fearful of failing or hurting others. The motivation to change was high among this group. Increasing understanding and insight were identified as equally important to behavioral practice in the process of change.

Suggestions were made within the discussion of ways in which this data may indicate that professional women's responses are an accommodation to an accurate diagnosis of the

reality of organizational sexism rather than simply attributes of their internalization of the sex-role conditioning.

Suggestions for future assertion training for professional women included:

1. Utilization of an approach which integrates cognitive understanding, self-insight, and behavioral practice through role play with modeling and feedback.
2. Incorporation into the design of material focusing on organizational sexism and its impact on professional women's behavior.
3. As homogeneous a group for training as is possible.
4. Incorporation of approaches which identify and develop alternatives to managerial rationalism as a behavioral goal.
5. Incorporation of material focusing on the individual and personal rights of the professional woman.

Generalizations from the study. In conceptualizing the results of the data presented in this case study, some factors emerged as true for this group of women which may be generalizable to professional women as a whole. These merit special highlighting in the hope that they will provide direction both for supporting professional women's functioning within organizations as well as provide direction for further study.

1. While there is no indication that women are functioning less well than their male counterparts in "doing the job", there is evidence that women are functioning less effectively than they could. They report "hanging back" in meetings and not initiating ideas as frequently as they could. The extent of

energy and creativity which women have to contribute is presently under-available to organizations. While this obviously is of concern to professional women, it also represents a loss to the organizations for which they work. It would appear that organizations need to investigate how organizational sexism is operating and what can be done to change these dynamics.

2. There was an absence of certain management skills among these women (i.e., long range planning) and no indication that organizations were making any effort to provide consistent management training to women. Primarily these women learned management skills on their own in whatever ways they could. Change in this area would appear to be an organizational rather than an individual responsibility.

3. As a group, these women were concerned with organizational goals and relationship values and not motivated by or striving for either personal power or status. Whether this is reflective of people who select to work for human service organizations or is generalizable of professional women needs further study.

4. The strength of the need for affiliation/approval for this group of women had varying consequences. On the one hand, it influenced and supported a consistent respect and regard for other's feelings, rights, and personal worth. Simultaneously, however, this concern with other's feelings at

times made it difficult for women to engage in such reasonable behaviors as those implied in supervision or in protecting their own rights.

It is also true that the behaviors which are called for in either supervision or protecting your rights are neither invited nor reinforced in women. Instead, women are invited to nurture, to understand, to be peacemakers and to follow. Women who decline this invitation are met with anger and aggression and are frequently labeled (i.e., castrating bitch). It is interesting, and perhaps predictable, that the anger which met these women's assertiveness came predominately from males and was predominately in the form of passive aggression, a much more controlling form of anger since it is an indirect, confusing message which simultaneously invites nurturing.

More study needs to occur in this area. Questions have been raised in this study regarding the meaning of this affiliation need in women as well as what external factors impact on this need. More research also needs to be conducted on effective ways in which the sexist structure of organizations themselves can be changed in order to reduce the unique threats which professional women face solely on the basis of their femaleness.

5. Professional women need support in increasing understanding and developing alternatives in the areas of interpersonal power as it is effected by sex-role conditioning and

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## APPENDIX A

## PRE-INTERVIEW FORM

PRE-INTERVIEW

1. I am going to read a series of situations which could occur to any professional woman. I would like you to imagine you are in your current work setting as you respond to these questions. At the end of each situation, I would like you to tell me how you think you would respond. What is your usual or spontaneous response in a situation such as this? (INTERVIEWER: REPEAT INSTRUCTIONS AS NEEDED AFTER READING EACH SITUATION. SUFFICIENT RESPONSE IS EXAMPLE OF WHAT SHE WOULD SAY IF SHE INDICATES VERBALIZATION AS ACTION, e.g., "I'd say something" PROBE "WHAT WOULD YOU SAY?").
  - a. You are working with a group of colleagues on matters that are important for your agency. You have some good ideas to contribute to the discussion. You are repeatedly cut-off by a staff member.
  - b. Someone you work with has been borrowing your things without asking.
  - c. You are being indirectly attacked by someone in your agency.
  - d. You have been unjustly criticized by your boss in a staff meeting.
  - e. You are the only person from your agency attending a regional or national meeting. There are about fifty people in the session you are in. You do not agree with what is happening.

- f. You are being asked to take on added responsibilities which you do not want to do.
- g. You are being patronized by a male colleague.
- h. A colleague is repeatedly initiating social contact with you which you are not interested in.
- i. You want a raise or a promotion.
- j. You have not had a word of appreciation for any of your work in the past month.

2. For this second set of questions, again think of yourself within your own agency. For each of us, there are some times and conditions when it is easy to do something which at other times would seem very difficult or impossible to do. In thinking about yourself and your own behavior professionally, can you describe when it is:  
(INTERVIEWER: ADEQUATE RESPONSE = SPECIFIC DESCRIPTION OF CONDITIONS. PROBE MIGHT BE: for "When people are receptive." "How do you know people are receptive?")

a...easiest to tell people what you think?

b...when that is most difficult or impossible.

c...easiest to ask for what you want?

d...when that is most difficult or impossible.

e...when it is easiest to say no.

f...when that is most difficult or impossible.

3. If you were to describe yourself to someone, would you say you generally were more assertive (INTERVIEWER: HELP PERSON CHOOSE ONE IF NECESSARY):

- a. \_\_\_ in one to one contact or \_\_\_ in a group
- b. \_\_\_ with people you know or \_\_\_ with strangers
- c. \_\_\_ with males or \_\_\_ with females
- d. \_\_\_ in personal situations or \_\_\_ in work situations
- e. \_\_\_ with people with equal organizational rank or  
 \_\_\_ with people with lower organizational rank or  
 \_\_\_ with people with higher organizational rank.

4. In summary, would you say you see yourself professionally as:

1	2	3	4	5	6
---	---	---	---	---	---

highly  
assertive

not at all  
assertive



5. How would that have been different a year ago?

1	2	3	4	5	6
---	---	---	---	---	---

highly assertive not at all assertive

6. (INTERVIEWER: I AM LOOKING FOR SPECIFICITY ABOUT ROLE RELATIONSHIPS e.g., BOSS, AND/OR SITUATIONAL DYNAMICS, e.g., CONFLICT. PROBE FOR "WHAT OTHER AREAS". REPEAT UNTIL THEY RESPOND: "NOTHING".

What areas do you identify as problem areas for you where you would like to begin working to develop more assertive skills?

7. Are there areas where you'd like to be or feel you should be less assertive? Please describe. (INTERVIEWER: IF RESPONDENT MAKES DISTINCTION BETWEEN ASSERTIVE AND AGGRESSIVE, PROBE USING EITHER OF THOSE LABELS: "CAN YOU DESCRIBE WHAT YOU DO, NO MATTER HOW YOU LABEL IT, WHICH YOU WOULD LIKE TO DO LESS OR." PROBE FOR SPECIFICITY AS IN NO. 6. ASK: "ANYTHING ELSE?" UNTIL RESPONDENT SAYS NOTHING.)

8. Are there situations where you view your behavior as non-assertive but have no desire to change? Please describe. (INTERVIEWER: PROBE AS IN NO. 7).

9. How did you decide to sign up for this assertiveness training program? Would you say you signed up primarily because:

(INTERVIEWER: HELP PERSON SELECT ONE.)

\_\_\_ of professional need

\_\_\_ of personal need

\_\_\_ someone else recommended it

\_\_\_ it seemed like a good idea at the time

\_\_\_ other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_

10. People tend to learn behavior from a variety of sources, including from other people. I'd like you to think of the woman you most admire....(ALLOW TIME). Please describe what she does.

(INTERVIEWER: PROBE FOR BEHAVIOR. IF "she's ambitious..." "HOW DO YOU KNOW...WHAT DOES SHE DO?")

11. Think of a woman you would describe as assertive who "turned you off." (ALLOW TIME: IF RESPONDENT EXPRESSES CONFUSION/ CONCERN ABOUT AGGRESSIVE/ASSERTIVE, ASK: "CAN YOU DESCRIBE WHAT IT IS SHE DOES, NO MATTER HOW YOU'D LABEL IT?) Will you describe what she does which you do not like.

12. Given that you reach your goal of increased assertiveness, whatever that may be, what is the best possible consequence of that for you (PROBE FOR SPECIFICS OF BEHAVIOR).

...in terms of your own behavior

...in terms of others response to you

13. Given that you reach your goal of increased assertiveness, whatever that may be, what is the worst possible consequence of that for you? (PROBE FOR SPECIFICS OF BEHAVIOR).

...in terms of your own behavior

...in terms of others response to you

14. Other women have expressed some of the following concerns about developing more assertiveness. When I read them, would you tell me for each of the following whether it is Very much a concern (V), Somewhat a concern (S), or Not at all a concern (N).
- a. \_\_\_ I may not be able to change.
  - b. \_\_\_ I may not like the changes afterwards.
  - c. \_\_\_ I may lose my current support group.
  - d. \_\_\_ I may offend people by being assertive.
  - e. \_\_\_ I may jeopardize a significant relationship.
  - f. \_\_\_ My boss may not be able to handle my assertive behavior.
  - g. \_\_\_ I may lose my job if I act assertively.
  - h. \_\_\_ I may end up being so different no one will want to relate to me.
  - i. \_\_\_ Other (DO YOU HAVE ANY OTHER CONCERNS NOT LISTED ABOVE?)
-

## APPENDIX B

### PRE-READING AND TRAINING MATERIAL

### PRE-WORKSHOP READINGS

The material in this section should be read by each participant prior to the beginning of the workshop training in order to provide a common conceptual base.



### ROLE CONDITIONING AND WOMEN

Roles are those behaviors, with their supportive attitudes and values, which define how one shall act in relation to another. As we use the concept of role, we generally do think of it in relationship to its "other". Wife relates to husband, mother to child. This relationship dynamic is based on a cultural agreement of need. Without this agreement between role/role recipient, the behavior would be negatively evaluated as evidenced by the reaction which "mothering" behavior elicits when it is directed inappropriately.

It is also part of our common knowledge that an individual assumes many roles. A woman may be labeled, by self and others, as wife, mother, friend and daughter and everyone involved will understand clearly the variations in appropriate behaviors from relationship to relationship. All of these roles are actually part of a whole and therefore can exist simultaneously.

The sex-role, however, appears to be different. Female-ness appears to be more over-riding and all-encompassing a role and frequently appears, in the area of public knowledge, to become confused with biology or absolute truth. People will respond with statements such as: mothering is something a woman does whereas femaleness is something a woman is.

While an accurate statement on one level, this type of thinking is also confusing since there are clearly defined behaviors and attitudes attached to femaleness which indicate the presence of role conditioning.

The difficulty in conceptualizing female as a role, I think, arises from two problems. First, femaleness actually fits into Angrist's definition of a role constellation. It is the combination of a variety of roles. As such, it is frequently hard to pin down. It moves from child to work to lover to parents to costuming to speech patterns to recreational preferences in a manner that appears quite different from moment to moment until we begin to consider the connections or similarities rather than the contrasts or differences. Femaleness is a higher level of abstraction than wife-mother, etc.

A second problem, relating to the first, is that we have subsequently told ourselves that femaleness/maleness is the highest level of abstraction possible. Culturally we have chosen to confuse our thinking and no longer remember, if indeed we ever knew, that female is a part of humanness in the same way and to the same degree that male is.

The process of understanding differences is a process of comparisons and contrasts. And comparing and contrasting is a process of evaluating one element in terms of the properties

of the other which invites "more-less" thinking. On some level, for example, we understand cold by the fact that it has less warmth than hot. In elevating female and male to whole, we have chosen to focus on the differences. It is this process which has then allowed us to "weight" one over the other, to give one more power, more prestige. Because we understand that roles cannot exist in isolation but always in relation to "other", the process of attributing male with power automatically attributes female with less power.

Much in the literature reflects general agreement among the professional analyzers of roles and/or women within the culture regarding sex-role conditioning. A few of those generalizations include the following:

Sex role conditioning begins at birth (Chafez).

Sex roles are internalized (Chessler).

Sex roles developed out of the needs of society (Rossi, Firestone).

Continued enforcement of sex roles culturally relates to power/control (Firestone).

The control has been exercised through all the major cultural institutions (Firestone).

Sex role stereotypes or characteristics are not inherent to the group (Chafez).

The female sex role centers around behaviors which are more nurturing and family centered as opposed to the male sex role which is more aggressive and occupation centered (Chafez).

The female sex role behaviors allow more of the emotional and sacrifice intellectual competence (Chafez).

The female sex role creates financial dependency in women (Firestone).

Female sex role conditioning fixates women on developing/maintaining cultural "beauty" or outward appearance (Friedan).

The female role is characterized more heavily than the male role with proscriptions (Polk and Stein).

The traditional female role is now no longer congruent with societal needs (Janeway).

The female sex role is viewed as less mature/healthy than the male role (Broverman).

There is substantiative agreement within the literature that  
SEX ROLE CONDITIONING RENDERS WOMEN AS "LESS" IN ANY MAJOR  
CULTURALLY VALUED DIMENSION.

The following chart formulates some possible Human Rights in seven different categories. I then list the allowed female behavior for each category according to traditional sex-role conditioning and the Control System which is utilized to maintain the discrepancy between the Allowed Female Behavior and the Human Right.

The concept of Human Rights as it is used here implies a "given", an available behavior which an individual may freely choose or freely not choose in any given situation without fear of sanction. These rights focus on two general areas: the right to have one's personal integrity uninvaded in an

interpersonal contact and the right to develop one's competencies in relation to the necessary tasks of life. In identifying Human Rights, what is implied is not that all males behave as identified in Column I but rather that males are culturally granted these rights more frequently and escape sanction for assuming behaviors to protect these rights. Females, on the other hand, are assumed not to have the rights and are sanctioned for behaving as if they do.

The sanctions occur through the Control system identified in Column III. What is interesting in this column is the indications it gives us of how pervasive and total sanctions are for any given woman. Women seem to live with full knowledge that to alter their allowed behavior in any significant way may place them in jeopardy on an interpersonal, community and societal level. Thus it is the matrix, the web, the total gestalt, rather than any one thread, which combines to create an impotence which is paralleled only if one analyzes other oppressed groups.



CULTURAL DIMENSION	HUMAN RIGHT	ALLOWED FEMALE BEHAVIOR	CONTROL SYSTEM
Sexual	<p>To participate equally in decisions regarding sexual behavior.</p> <p>To achieve pleasure and satisfaction in sexual activity.</p>	<p>Non-aggressive and non-initiating regarding act, partner, type, frequency or duration.</p> <p>Focus on pleasing male - not self.</p> <p>Male orgasm has precedence.</p>	<p>Female labeled.</p> <p>Social and legal sanctions.</p> <p>Male punishes by losing erection/through "other women"</p>
Technical	To understand the technical aspects of our society including those machines which are utilized personally in order to maintain daily existence.	Utilization of family-related machinery only with restrictions on design and repair.	<p>Non-access to technical courses/programs.</p> <p>Non-access to technical guilds.</p> <p>Laughed at/labeled.</p>
Physical (care & safety)	<p>To have access to information regarding one's physical nature and what effects it.</p> <p>To participate equally in decisions regarding one's physical well being.</p> <p>To maintain control over one's physical self.</p>	<p>Trust and dependency on others for correct answers to solve any physical problem.</p> <p>No decision making power over own body in many areas.</p> <p>Attacks on physical self to be accepted or avoided.</p>	<p>Withholding of physiological knowledge.</p> <p>Withholding of information and control of system.</p> <p>Use of physical force/brutality.</p> <p>Utilization of legal system.</p>

CULTURAL DIMENSION	I	II	III
	HUMAN RIGHT	ALLOWED FEMALE BEHAVIOR	CONTROL SYSTEM
Social (recreational)	To function equally in all social aspects of the culture.	Disproportionally high functioning in those as- pects linked to home and/ or children.	Labeling. Physical threat.
Psychologi- cal	To grow and function as a self-affirming, rational- emotional-social person.	Disapproved independent functioning in many areas unless with male.	Some legal or quasi-legal restrictions.
Legal	To function within the same laws as everyone else.	Dependency and reactive behavior expected. Emotional side rewarded more than rational.	Labeling. Drugs. Institutionalization.
Interpersonal	To understand one's personal rights for self- psychological intactness in an interpersonal situation.  To state those rights when necessary.  To expect respect for those rights.	To function within a different set of laws which impose greater re- strictions and allow fewer privileges.  Cognitive/emotional focus on others' needs.  Denial of self.  Verbal/behavioral reactive- ness with proscriptions on assertive behavior and punishment for aggressive behavior.	Total legal system.  Labeling. Rejection.

Chafetz, in working with groups of students, developed the following chart depicting sex-role stereotype traits.

Characteristics	Feminine Traits
Physical	Weak, helpless, dainty, nonathletic Worry about appearance and aging Sensual Graceful
Functional	Domestic Maternal, involved with children Church-going
Sexual	Virginal, inexperienced, double standard Must be married, female "catches" spouse Sexually passive, uninterested Responsible for birth control Seductive, flirtatious
Emotional	Emotional, sentimental, romantic Cries Expressive Compassionate Nervous, insecure, fearful
Intellectual	Scatterbrained, frivolous, shallow, inconsistent, intuitive Impractical Perceptive, sensitive "Arty" Idealistic, humanistic
Interpersonal	Petty, flirty, coy, gossipy, catty, sneaky, fickle Dependent, overprotected, responsive Status conscious and competitive, refined, adept in social graces Follower, subservient, submissive

Three categories overlap between her chart and mine: sexual, physical and interpersonal. In comparing the identified traits in each category with the allowed behaviors and control system, it is easy to see how the conditioned-trait both produces the behavior and is the "Achilles heel" for control.

	Behavior	Trait	Control
Sexual	non-aggressive focus on male	inexperience passive seductive married	label/reject legal system
Physical	dependency withdrawal	weak helpless	force control of space
Inter- personal	focus on others self-denial	overprotected responsive follower submissive self-conscious	label/reject

Because of the total nature of sex-role conditioning, all women have internalized the specifics of oppression although, depending on subcultures and family interpretations many variations have been allowed. The important point, however, is that all variations were still clearly within the "given" that to be female was to be "less".

The implications of power as the underlying issue was clear in this discussion. It is interesting to examine Rollo May's

five stages of power in the context of the conditioning of women as less within this culture. May lists the stages as: the power to be, self-affirmation, self-assertion, aggression and violence. Since all humans need to experience themselves as powerful, and since power is an interpersonal dynamic, how does this affect women in view of their conditioning?

The female sex-role conditioning produces blocking as early as the self-affirmation stage. Here, as women attempt to experience themselves as significant and to affirm that with others, the sex-role conditioning provides counter messages which state to women that they have little or limited power on this level. It appears clear that it is not possible to feel powerful and be conditioned "female". The stereotype is generally as follows:

Women are less strong, less intelligent, less able to cope with the world, less scientific, less mechanical, less able to understand financial matters, less practical, less rational, and produce little of worth in the arts or in business. On the other hand, they are more emotional, more dependent, more manipulative, more able to do non-think, routine work like housework, and suited to bear and raise children on demand.

This type of stereotyping, traditionally believed by both sexes and reinforced in the interpersonal and societal context, blocks self-affirmation. Since most of the things which women are conditioned to be better at are less valued by everyone,



women are left with being able to affirm themselves in ways that lack power: an obvious psychological contradiction.

Women who try to break this bind and move into human behavior are frequently met with more hostility and negation for being "unfeminine". Self-affirmation has been, therefore, a difficult step for women to experience which probably connects with the underlying assumption of sexism which is that women "should" have less power.

May's third step, self-assertion, is a behavior which has been proscribed for women. Assertive behavior is counter to docile, feminine, dependent behavior. Therefore, for women, it is a step which has been most frequently missed since we have had traditionally no experience and no role models to allow this behavior to become internalized.

Aggression and violence May views as the inevitable final step when the first three are blocked. There is clear evidence that this is happening to women. The horror stories of what women do to their children as a result of their aggression, the mythology which has some basis in truth of women pushing their husbands onward and upward, the behavior which can be publicly observed of women at sales, in grocery store lines or in public school classrooms screaming at children, the nagging and blaming stereotypes, are all probably linked to this dynamic.

Finally, when all else fails, violence erupts. Most frequently, again due to the nature of the sex-role conditioning, violence in women turns inward (Broverman, 1974; Van Vuuren, 1973; Chesler, 1972; Allport, 1954). The rising number of women on tranquilizers or other drugs, including alcohol, the disproportionate number of women in therapy and the statistics of mental hospitals serve as examples of the inner-directed violence. Women are taught, if things seem bad enough, attack self rather than others, and most women follow the sex-role conditioning.

Where does all of this leave us now? Several points need to be identified.

1. All of us, as females, were conditioned in some way to feel/ behave as inferior to males.
2. That conditioning has been internalized to such an extent that we are often unaware that we are "doing" what the cultural conditioning taught us to do.
3. Individual women's awareness and the cultural supports for change are increasing.
4. In many (most?) cases, awareness is increasing at a more rapid rate than cultural support.
5. This produces more potential for conflict/pain since, with awareness, women are noticing things which were previously assumed and unnoticed.
6. In dealing with conflict, women have traditionally only two options: acceptance which negates self-power and self-worth or aggression.

It is this identified discrepancy which represents what Schein calls need and what Lewin describes as unfreezing. A clear learning point exists for women. It is for this reason that this training program was developed. The area of assertive behavior is a necessary gap in our learning of behavioral options which must be filled. Women must learn to behave in more ways in order to have the necessary choices in life. This manual represents another option.

## SELF-ASSERTION BEHAVIOR TRAINING FOR WOMEN

Assertiveness is a particular way of behaving. It is a way of behaving which has identified effects and which significantly differs from other ways of behaving.

### What is assertive behavior?

- . . .Assertive behavior is clear. There is no mistake about what is being said.
- . . .Assertive behavior is direct. It focuses on the issue without blurring.
- . . .Assertive behavior is self-responsible. It states and protects the human rights of the person asserting.
- . . .Assertive behavior is non-attacking. It recognizes the interpersonal limits of other's rights.

### What are the effects of assertive behavior?

Assertive behavior allows clearer communication between individuals which provides a method for more honest and less confused relationships. It serves as an equalizer of relationships so that both parties involved function with equal rights rather than one with fewer rights and the other with rights and privileges. It provides a method for people to respect their own rights and have them respected by others more frequently. Finally, it provides a method of behaving which allows self-confidence rather than fear or hostility to be the motivating emotions.

How is assertive behavior different from other behavior?

In answering this it will be helpful to think of behavior as functioning on a continuum according to the amount of energy any behavior uses. At the left end of the continuum there is little energy directed outward and at the right end, there is a very high energy level with increases of outer-directed energy as we move from the left-hand point toward the right.

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LOW ENERGY DIRECTED OUT	MODERATE ENERGY DIRECTED OUT	HIGH ENERGY DIRECTED OUT
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Sleeping or watching a movie might be examples of low energy behavior whereas running would be high energy. One behavior can also be placed on the continuum since it is possible to do a behavior in various ways. Closing a door, for example, might have this range:

low energy	moderate energy	high energy
watching the door close	closing the door	slamming the door

The left-hand side of the continuum we can label non-assertive behavior. This would include behaviors where we are saying or doing very little about what we think or want. Instead we are retreating or withdrawing. On the right-hand side of the continuum we can put the label aggressive. Here we are saying and doing a lot and doing it with a great deal of force. In the middle we put the label assertive. Here we neither withdraw nor attack but we are saying and doing what we need to.



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non-assertive	assertive	aggressive
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And finally, we need to identify what emotional states accompany each of those places. The low-energy, non-assertive end usually begins with fear. It is an "I wouldn't dare" position. The high energy aggressive end is anger. It is an "I'm going to get you so that I can..." position. The mid-point is confidence. It is an "I can be responsible and so can you" position.

low outward energy	moderate outward energy	high outward energy
non-assertive fear	assertive confidence	aggressive anger

---

As an example, let's think about three children who have just been dropped off in front of the theater to see a Saturday matinee. All three children want to see the movie. The non-assertive child, however, hangs back and watches the line of children buying tickets. Even though s/he wants to get inside, s/he is unsure. The assertive child walks up and gets in line to buy a ticket. The aggressive child runs up to the front of the line and pushes some other children in order to get in line. Three children with the same goal of seeing the movie who behave very differently.

Self-Assertion Training for Women believes that women have been taught low energy or non-assertive behaviors, and that,

in stress or frustration situations women have learned high outward energy or aggressive behaviors. But there have been no models or supports within this culture for women to learn assertive behaviors. This is not to suggest that all men are skilled at assertive behaviors. It does appear, however, that men, relating to the other men in the occupational world, frequently utilize assertive behaviors. Assertiveness does not conflict with the traditional male role conditioning to the extent and in the manner that it does with the traditional female role conditioning.

It is also true that as women are more and more confronted with the realization of stereotyping and discrimination and the resistance to change which is currently existing, they will need as many behavioral alternatives as possible in order to be effective. Aggression as the only choice imposes unnecessary limits.

One final word about the value judgment implied in Self-Assertion Behavior Training for Women. Assertive behavior is not a good and non-assertive or aggressive behavior a bad. There are obviously many situations where aggression or non-assertion is appropriate just as there are situations where assertiveness is appropriate. The value assumption within this training is that women need to understand and be able to do

all types of behaviors. Then, and only then, are we free to make choices. And that is the kind of freedom which is equality.

### VALIDATING YOUR "INNER" SPACE

In spite of what you or I were told growing up, your feelings, thoughts, attitudes, beliefs, wants, likes and dislikes are neither good nor bad. All of these things which go on "inside" of us are a result of our past/present experiences. They are what we have been taught through what others have said and how others have behaved toward us.

We were all taught something which is untrue. We were taught that there were good feelings and bad feelings; good thoughts and attitudes and beliefs and bad ones; good things to like and want and bad things to like and want. And then we were taught that people's worth could be determined by whether they were filled with the good or with the bad. Finally we were taught that "good" filled people were liked and "bad" filled people were disliked.

Now since everyone wants to think of herself as worthwhile and to experience being cared for by other people, many of us accepted those untrue rules. In fact, we accepted them at such a young age that many of us haven't even thought much about whether they make any sense or not. Without even thinking about it, we believe whenever anyone likes us or whenever we feel worthwhile that it must be because of those rules.

The logic is similar to the Indian custom of the Rain Dance. The tribe performs the Rain Dance on a regular basis and on a regular basis it rains. Since they believe there is a connection and since rain is needed, it is perceived as dangerous or foolish to eliminate the Dance.

For the Indian tribe in our illustration there are unintended consequences of the Dance. It is good muscle development, good dancers receive status in the eyes of other members of the tribe and it is a social occasion.

For us, there are also unintended consequences but they appear to be negative rather than positive. What are the consequences of our "game".

First, some people use different standards to evaluate what is good and what is bad. Therefore, even if you can manage to decide on a clear list of good feelings, thoughts, attitudes, etc., you will probably be interacting sometimes with other people who have a different list. At best this makes things confusing in trying to relate. At worst it means each of you will feel "bad" according to the other person's list.

Second, there are two types of "good-bad" lists going around in this culture; one for men and another for women. The woman's list is much stricter. In other words, we're discriminated against.



Third, nobody ever really thinks or feels "inside" the way their list says they should all the time. We have several choices when that happens and none of the choices seem to be very beneficial for people. We can judge ourselves as bad or worthless or inadequate or unlovable people. Or, we can ignore those parts of ourselves and pretend to ourselves that they are not real. Or, we can find excuses so we don't have to feel so bad or blame someone else for our thoughts and feelings.

Since we all do judge ourselves and ignore ourselves and find excuses and blame others some of the time, let's examine why those techniques are considered inappropriate.

Judging ourselves makes us feel less than other people. That must mean that someone else is better. We write a story in our heads about "rotten old me" and "perfect old you". And it is just that; a story, a fiction. When we do that, we are no longer living in a world of reality.

If we ignore or pretend to ourselves, two things can happen. One is that we block off parts of ourselves and go around as part-people, having to be careful and so closing down more and more. The other is that those feelings or thoughts or attitudes or wants are still inside somewhere and sometimes manage to come out in indirect or unexpected ways that make us feel more vulnerable.

Finally, if we make excuses or blame someone else, we create additional problems and still don't get much of what we want or need. Excusing or blaming takes energy and keeps us stuck at that point.

One final thing makes our self-judging "good" list even more complicated. We have also been told all of our lives that good, nice, lovable girls don't feel or think in certain ways. Of course that also isn't true but that hasn't mattered much in the past. We've partly believed that girls are different than people and judged ourselves accordingly. And partly we've learned only the behaviors which go with "girl" feelings and thoughts and so don't have any behaviors for the other feelings and thoughts.

Let's begin by accepting that our feelings, thoughts, attitudes, beliefs, wants, likes and dislikes are neither good nor bad. Whatever is going on inside any of us is logical at the moment, given who we are. Let's accept that as a fact which is true, even if it doesn't feel completely understandable or comfortable right now. Does that mean that we can't change? Of course not. We're changing all the time anyway. What it does mean is that we can be more "in-charge" of the change. If we don't pretend, we know more. We can decide and act rather than feeling reactive.

But won't that make us feel more vulnerable to know the "inside" things that we don't think are good? In some ways, probably so, until we really begin to believe that we have a right to be who we are. We will be vulnerable to our own past way of judging ourselves. We don't have to make ourselves more vulnerable to others, however. Behavior is different than thinking or feeling. Behavior is the public, outside stuff which everyone can see and evaluate. But we can always make choices about behavior. An example would be:

I FEEL angry about something you did (The feeling is not good or bad.).

I act (BEHAVIOR) by:

- . . .telling you I don't mind
- . . .telling you that you are stupid
- . . .walking away
- . . .hitting you
- . . .telling you I am angry and what I want

I have a lot of choices of how I want to behave. Once I make a choice, you and I and anyone else who witnessed our transaction can evaluate what happened. My behavior is public. I can choose and am responsible for it.

The first step in Assertive Behavior, then, is to acknowledge your right to feel, think, believe, want and like whatever you find yourself feeling, thinking, believing, wanting and

liking at any moment WITHOUT LABELING THOSE GOOD OR BAD. One way to help yourself do that is to remember that those "inside" things are different from "outside" behavior. A second way to help yourself acknowledge your right to your "inside" space is to remember that it is fiction that other people are different from you in their "inside" space.

SESSION 1



### SESSION I: AGENDA

1. Get acquainted: share expectations
2. Sharing of design of training program
3. Stem Sentence Focused Exercise
4. Process experience
5. Explain record-keeping system and distribute forms
6. Evaluate session

### SESSION I: TRAINING DESIGN TECHNIQUES

#### Primary Techniques

#### Purpose

- |                      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
|----------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1. Discussion        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-to evaluate and understand own behavior</li> <li>-to identify and understand other's behavior</li> <li>-to identify and understand alternative behaviors.</li> </ul>                                                                                                           |
| 2. Focused exercises | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-to identify specific skills and behavioral options</li> <li>-to practice behaviors within a structured situation.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                   |
| 3. Role playing      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-to practice skills and alternatives</li> <li>-to identify possible reactions from others</li> <li>-to practice methods of responding to reactions.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                  |
| 4. Record keeping    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-to plan ahead (goal setting)</li> <li>-to document on an ongoing basis (problem solving &amp; evaluation)</li> <li>-to provide a written record of success/non-success with an analysis of restraining forces (problem solving, reality testing and reward system).</li> </ul> |

## STEM SENTENCE FOCUSED EXERCISE

### Validating "Inner" Space

#### Rationale:

In developing new behaviors, it is necessary to begin practicing or doing rather than talking about doing. It is also important, in effecting personal change, to risk in a safe, accepting environment since too high a threat level will block change.

#### Purposes:

1. To help individuals begin to identify thoughts, feelings, etc., which have been used to evaluate self as inferior or bad.
2. To begin describing those in a non-evaluative manner to another person.
3. To receive non-evaluative feedback on the logic and commonality of "inside" space.
4. To receive reinforcement for the right to that "inside" space.
5. To begin practicing non-evaluative feedback.

#### Directions:

Divide into dyads. Spend two minutes telling your partner the answer to the stem sentence. At the end of the two minutes, the partner validates the logic, commonality and human right. The task is then reversed with partner 2 responding to the same stem sentence and partner 1 validating after the two minutes. The group leader gives directions on stem sentences and responses and monitors time.

At the end of that sequence, the dyads rotate so that each participant has a new partner for the next stem sentence and response. This pattern continues for five stem sentences and responses.

The group leader will need to be sensitive to the individual response level (verbal

and non-verbal) during this exercise. It may be necessary to restate some of the assumptions in the pre-reading material and to provide some support for the group members that this is a difficult area for many of us to begin talking about.

In suggesting the response pattern after each stem, the group leader may want to share with the group that she understands responses which are programmed like this seem artificial and that many of us are unused to responding with this type of validation and therefore may feel uncomfortable at first. As we become more familiar with validating feedback, we will also become more comfortable.

Think of yourself as a professional woman. Try and set a clear picture of the "on the job" you that you know.

#### Stem 1

Partner 1, in two minutes, tell your partner the answer to this sentence:

I felt so dumb when . . . .

After two minutes: Partner 2, in your own words, respond to your partner's statement, telling her that you would have felt dumb too. Feeling dumb is a terrible feeling. You hate it when you feel that way. Tell her she has a right to try and do something about that.

Now reverse roles. Partner 2 speaks to the stem sentence and after two minutes, partner 1 is instructed to respond.

Change partners.

#### Stem 2

Partner 1, in two minutes, tell your partner something which you really dislike but have never said anything about or find it difficult to talk about.

After two minutes: Partner 2, in your own words tell your partner that you hear she really

dislikes that; that you dislike things too;  
and that she has a right to her dislike.

Reverse roles and repeat sequence.

Change partners.

Stem 3

Partner 1, in two minutes, tell your partner about something you really like (an attitude or idea you hold) which you think most people would disagree with for some reason.

After two minutes: Partner 2, in your own words, tell your partner that you hear she really likes that and that she has a right to.

Reverse roles and repeat sequence.

Change partners.

Stem 4

Partner 1, in two minutes, tell your partner about something which you want which you think is really unfair.

After two minutes: Partner 2, in your own words, tell your partner that she has a right to want that and that you have wanted things that seemed unfair too.

Reverse roles and repeat sequence.

Change partners.

Stem 5

Partner 1, in two minutes, tell your partner something which makes you angry.

After two minutes: Partner 2, in your own words, tell your partner that she has a right to get angry, that her anger is logical and that you know for a fact that the situation she is describing would make any sensible person angry.

Reverse roles and repeat sequence.

Evaluating the Experience:

In evaluating this experience with the entire group, the following questions may be useful.

What did you experience while doing this exercise?

Did it get any easier to talk?

How did you react to your partner's responses?

What was difficult? What was helpful?

Did you think that any of your responses were true for you because you are a woman?

What do you think about validating "inner" space now?

Can you identify what you want to work on in this area? How do you plan to do that?



PRE-READING FOR SESSION 2

Making Clear Statements About Your Own Space

The following material should  
be read by participants before  
Session 2.

### Making Clear Statements About Your Own Space

In beginning Section II, we will need to remind ourselves and each other that there are two separate and sometimes opposing things going on within each of us. This creates a problem for us. The two things are what we want and what we think we should want. If these don't agree, we become afraid to say what we want.

The "should" part of us is very strong. Most of our "shoulds" are based on conclusions we form about ourselves or others which are not true but that doesn't seem to make much difference in how we behave if we don't examine that clearly. For example: suppose I am visiting you at your house and I want to go home earlier than we had planned. My "should" for staying can be that I'm afraid I'll hurt your feelings (I conclude you're pretty weak and easily hurt) or that I would be behaving in a rude way (I conclude I'm really not a nice person and you would find me out). So, I fight with myself inside. If the "should" wins and I stay, I probably communicate to you that I don't want to be there anyway by being less attentive and restless. I probably also feel less good about myself. The only thing that was gained is that I can tell myself that I did what I "should" have done. It's a little like cleaning your plate as a kid. It didn't accomplish much but you certainly knew you were being "good".

As we practice making clear statements about ourselves, therefore, it will help us to talk about the "shoulds". Talking them through is helpful in a couple of ways. First, it makes them conscious and available to ourselves to examine logically. Sometimes when we think something completely through, we discover that we don't really believe what we seem to be saying behaviorally. I don't really believe, in the example above of my visiting you, that you are a weak person who can be damaged by my changing my mind. Before talking it through, I may never have realized that that was a conclusion I was behaving on.

The other benefit of talking through a "should" is that it gives us a chance to hear how other people think and feel about our conclusions. Let's turn our previous illustration around. Maybe I really do believe that you are a weak person. Since that is probably untrue, if we talk about that, you can help me to better understand reality.

The process of how we developed our "shoulds" is very complicated. One fact in that process, however, will help us here. This fact is that the "shoulds" are generally developed around fictions which we create about ourselves and about other people. When we feel weak, for example, we tend to create two fictions simultaneously. The first is that we must be a weak person or that something is really wrong with us and the second, which relates, is that other people are really different from us.

We then develop a series of "shoulds" for our behavior in order to protect ourselves and others from this "fairy-tale" we have just written and now believe. This is nonsense, even though most of us do it a lot.

The fact that this process is illogical and untrue gives us a place to start changing. It is also important to remember that we can practice behaving differently if we understand this fact. We do not have to really believe it. In fact, it would be difficult to really believe it until we have had some experiences which prove it to us and the practicing will give us the necessary experience.

The process of communicating to someone else about what you want or think is not really very complicated. You simply say it.

I want...to see this movie...to go home...to talk.  
How do we end up confusing the communication? Although we all have our variations, there are five major ways that most of us use to avoid being responsible for what we want. These are the five "Cop-Outs" we use.

#### COP-OUT 1: EXPLAINING

With this communication, we explain and justify whatever we are saying we want. We mix in what we want with all the reasons we can think of why we want whatever we're trying to communicate.

"I want to go home now" becomes:

"I had a really terrible day today. The kids...and the office...and then I found out that tomorrow morning at 8 a.m....Anyway, I have a terrible headache, actually I think I may be coming down with the flu, so I really think I may have to go home earlier than we had planned."

While it is sometimes important in communicating with someone else to share some of our reasons, the Cop-Out occurs when the reason part of the communication "takes over". What we are really saying when we use this Cop-Out is:

"I can't have what I want if you don't understand."

#### COP-OUT 2: OVER-SELL

When we move into over-sell, we are trying to convince the other person to agree with us. A simple wanting to go to a particular movie becomes a sales pitch which includes movie reviews, positive opinions of significant friends and several fantastic personal advantages in seeing the movie. The underlying message here is:

"I can't have what I want if you don't agree."

#### COP-OUT 3: MUDDY THE WATERS

This is the most confusing communication cop-out we can choose because it is indirect. We end up saying everything except what we want. "It's hot in here" may mean "I want the window open." "I had a terrible day" might mean "I want to be alone for awhile." The underlying message here is:



"You may let me have what I want if you don't  
really know I want it."

#### COP-OUT 4: WATERING IT DOWN

In this cop-out, we try to get what we want without letting the other person know how much we want it. We use a variety of qualifying words or phrases in order to "fool" the other person and make them think that it doesn't matter much, such as: "I guess I," "I kind of think...", "I sort of...". All of these phrases negate the strength of our wanting. The underlying message here is:

"If you don't know how much I want it, you may  
let me have it."

#### COP-OUT 5: APOLOGIZING

"I'm sorry" is the most frequently used phrase which we link with what we want although we have a lot of others like, "I don't mean to bother you (but)...", "If it wouldn't interfere, I...", "Excuse me, I...", etc. The underlying message here is:

"You may let me have what I want if you forgive  
and accept me."

An interesting thing about these Cop-Outs is that they all seem to communicate the same basic messages about who I think I am in relation to you. They all say:

I DON'T HAVE AS MUCH STRENGTH/POWER/WORTH AS YOU DO

I do not really believe I have a right to what I want unless you understand/agree/are confused/forgive/accept me. Then you will let me have what I want and that is a way of saying

I DO NOT HAVE TO BE RESPONSIBLE FOR MYSELF

because you really made the decision.

Since those basic messages are untrue and illogical about all of us, the second step in Assertive Behavior is to begin practicing Making Clear Statements about Your Own Space.

## SESSION II: AGENDA

1. Setting a focus and making contact  
"What's been happening since last week  
re: Validating Inner Space and/or individual plans made last Monday night.
2. Review of "cop-outs"  
Any questions or discussion
3. Focused Exercise: Communication Analysis  
-in sub-groups of three or four women
4. Process exercise in total group
5. Introduction of non-verbal checklist  
Discussion
6. Role play situations with feedback and  
repractice
7. Session evaluation

## DIRECTIONS FOR FEEDBACK

During role play situations, the group should attempt to provide the following type of feedback to be most useful to the person practicing.

### FEEDBACK SHOULD BE SPECIFIC

Example: "You were looking down at the floor when you said that."

### FEEDBACK SHOULD INCLUDE STATEMENTS ABOUT BOTH ASSERTIVE AND NON-ASSERTIVE BEHAVIORS

Example: "Your eye contact was direct. Your voice was very soft and hard to hear so that it sounded like you were unsure."

### FEEDBACK SHOULD INCLUDE AN ALTERNATIVE TO TRY.

Example: "You were twisting your fingers and that looked nervous. Try and find a comfortable relaxed place for your hands. How about..."

THE "COP-OUT" CHART

EXPLAINING	"I can't have what I want	IF	"you don't understand"
"because and because and..."			
OVERSELL	"I can't have what I want	IF	"you don't agree"
"here are a million reasons"			
MUDDY THE WATERS	"I can't have what I want	IF	"I say it first"
"indirect so you will say it"			
WATER IT DOWN	"I can't have what I want	IF	"you know I want it"
"sort of-kind-of- maybe-I guess"			
APOLOGIZE	"I can't have what I want	UNLESS	"you forgive and accept me"
"I'm sorry"			
ELICITING SYMPATHY	"I can't have what I want	UNLESS	"you feel sorry for me"
"poor me"			

# COMMUNICATION ANALYSIS EXERCISE

## Directions:

Analyze the following communication situations. Label each communication response according to the "cop-out" utilized. Identify which part of the communication illustrated the "cop-out".

1. Explaining
2. Over-sell
3. Muddy the Waters
4. Watering it Down
5. Apologizing

After each segment is discussed, develop an assertive response which would clearly state what is wanted without utilizing "cop-outs".

+++++

## Situation 1

You are an agency director. One of your staff counselors has not been keeping up-to-date records on clients, which is part of his job. You want him to update his records and keep them current.

## Responses

Jeff, I was wondering how you felt you were keeping up with all the aspects of your job? Sometimes it's hard to keep up with all details although that's important.

Jeff, I'm really sorry to have to bring this up. Probably I'm being overly concerned but I think you need to update your client records and try and stay up to date.

+++++

## Situation 2

A new project is being discussed by the staff. You want to be Chairperson for the project with major responsibilities for implementing the project.

## Responses

I am really excited about what we're talking about. This was my area of speciality in school. I have a lot of the necessary contacts that we'll need in order to get this going. As a



\_\_\_\_\_ matter of fact, several of the key people are personal friends of mine. Also, it seems to me that, at this point, I have the most free time to devote and this project, if we're going to do it right, will need a lot of time. I'd really like to take this one over.

\_\_\_\_\_ I guess I'm interested in charing this one. It's sort of in my field and is the type of project I'm kind of interested in.

\_\_\_\_\_ Well, I'd be willing to work on this one.

+++++

Situation 3      You are being offered a job which you like. You are unsure what salary is being considered within the quoted range but suspect it is lower than necessary. You want \$11,500.

Responses

\_\_\_\_\_ In order to take this job, I would have to have enough of a raise to make it worth leaving my present job. I've had a lot of heavy expenses lately, including my tuition loan. Also, it would cost me to move. I do have my degree plus some experience. I would want \$11,500.

\_\_\_\_\_ I don't mean to sound pushy but I would need to know about the salary before I could decide. What are you offering?

\_\_\_\_\_ Well, in order to take the job I'd need to earn more than the \$9,000 I presently earn.

+++++

Situation 4      You have been serving as chairperson of a committee for six months. You now want to step down from that position.

Responses

\_\_\_\_\_ I've been thinking about our leadership pattern. You know, if we really believe in shared leadership, then we need to rotate committee jobs so that different people can be chairperson. That's much more democratic and would probably make for much better morale here as well. Besides, there are some fantastic skills that people on this committee have that should be utilized more effectively.

\_\_\_\_\_ I want to resign as chairperson of this committee. I am very overworked as this time and really don't have the time to devote to these added responsibilities. Besides, I really haven't been feeling very well and I just have to cut back on what I'm doing. I can't physically keep going at the pace I have been.

\_\_\_\_\_ I am really overworked these days.

+++++

Situation 5            The office staff is planning a party for next weekend. You do not want to go.

Responses

\_\_\_\_\_ My kids have been having problems lately.

\_\_\_\_\_ I'm not sure. Maybe. I'll try and come.

\_\_\_\_\_ People certainly do a lot of partying around here. It seems to me that's not very healthy.

+++++

Situation 6            You have been spending some social time with a colleague for the past month. You are now aware that the colleague is becoming very invested in the relationship while you are becoming bored. You want to stop seeing her socially. She has just asked you to have dinner with her tonight.

Responses

\_\_\_\_\_ My schedule is getting hectic right now so I'm going to cut out all social activities.

\_\_\_\_\_ I really sense that you're having some difficulty with our relationship. It doesn't seem to be really good for you.

\_\_\_\_\_ I think we should see each other less frequently. Let's plan something for next week instead.

# NON-VERBAL COMMUNICATION

## MODALITY OF COMMUNICATION

	<u>NON-ASSERTIVE</u>		<u>ASSERTIVE</u>	
	<u>BEHAVIORS</u>	<u>FUNCTION</u>	<u>BEHAVIORS</u>	<u>FUNCTION</u>
Eye contact	looking down avoiding or shifting of focus	avoidance	direct contact	equality of transaction
Voice tone	unsure, hesitant quiet, hard to hear pleading little-girl or sexually inviting	inviting protection	clear steady middle-range direct	equality of transaction
Laughter/ smiling	excessive inappropriately timed	avoiding conflict	appropriately timed	equality of transaction
Body language	nervous: i.e., tapping, twisting, wringing hands passive: i.e., tilted head, slumping, pulling back, compressing body into small space	inviting attack	open direct using own space freely	equality of transaction

PRE-READING FOR SESSION 3

Making Clear Statements About What I Don't Want

The following material should  
be read by participants before  
Session 3.

### Making Clear Statements About What I Don't Want

After we learn how to identify our wants, sort out our "shoulds" and make clear statements about what we want, there is still another step. That final step has to do with our reaction to other people. Unfortunately there are others who are not very "together" in the communication area or very sensitive to human rights with whom we come into contact. Therefore, we are probably often in situations where someone else does or says something which invades our human rights. This seems to happen frequently to women because for such a long time everyone has assumed that women's rights were less than the rights of men.

Remember that rights have to do with the integrity and respect for our personhood. A large part of that has to do with our right to be our own unique selves with our own unique likes/dislikes, wants, feelings and attitudes. While we certainly do not have the right to inflict those on anyone else, it is interesting that frequently, as women, we don't realize that when we compromise "where we are" because of who we are with, that they are inflicting themselves on us. By letting that happen, we are walking around with two sets of rules, one for us and another for other people.

Part of the problem comes from our female conditioning to take care of others. In the process of trying (often with great success) to take care of husband, children, assorted



other family members, small children in the community, the sick and goodness knows who else, we have been unable to maintain a focus on taking care of ourselves. Somehow, according to the childhood fairy tales we were read, we were supposed to be taken care of by the ideal husband (daddy?) in return for all this good behavior. Even in the storybooks that kind of arrangement doesn't help people learn to be responsible for themselves. And in real life it leaves us without many skills in being assertive.

At least once a day, if we've learned to recognize what's going on, someone infringes on our rights. There we are, face to face with the dragon without a sword in hand and Saint George has moved to Terre Haute, Indiana. What in the world are we supposed to do.

"TELL THEM TO STOP! TELL THEM YOU DO NOT LIKE THAT!"

"Just like that?"

"Yes, just like that."

"Oh, I couldn't. Not little old me."

"O.K. Then let's learn how. Let's start with why you couldn't."

"Well, first of all I wouldn't know what to say."

"That we will practice in this section of the training. Why else?"

"I'd be scared."

So fear becomes the block we have to work with in this section. What are we really saying we believe about ourselves and

others when we move into fear? Exactly the same thing we were saying when we moved into our "shoulds".

"You are a very strong, powerful, super person and I am very weak and worthless and easily destroyed."

OR

"I am really such a strong, powerful person that, unless I am very careful, I will destroy you because you are so weak and fragile."

Now it is a fact that there are very few people walking around who are so fragile that they can be destroyed by someone being assertive.

It is also a fact that, even though we have been told for generations that as women we are weak and delicate, we are not fragile and on the edge of destruction, not even psychologically.

And finally, if we look over our individual lists of people we are afraid to be assertive with and examine it in terms of our real message that they are "super/powerful people", the logic breaks down completely. Those lists generally include a lot of very ordinary people just like the rest of us with a smattering of a few real smucks.

This is a very good thing to know. It won't make the fear go away, but it's still important to remember. "The truth shall make you free" doesn't apply here. What will make us free is the truth plus new skills/behaviors plus a lot of different experience. And we can do something about that.

There are some communication traps involved in this step that we need to understand first. They are traps because they end us up in either non-assertive or aggressive behavior and also because they are such a part of our common-everyday-American way of communicating with other people. Ordinary things become hard to notice and we need to notice this way of talking in order to avoid/change it.

#### TRAP 1: BLAMING

Blaming is a way of "getting back at someone" by trying to make them less. What it usually does is to make them mad and then they try to get back at us and we have a cycle going. Even if we succeed in getting them to feel rotten about themselves it won't change anything (except maybe, because we were really angry, we may feel better that we were successful at revenge). But people who get negated either withdraw or they tend to come back fighting (most of them haven't had any assertiveness training so they still have limited options).

Blaming statements are generalized (rather than specific) and have the other person as the subject (rather than self). Frequently blaming labels the other person.

"You are so..."

"You always..."

"You never..."

"You are a (nut...boar...slob...psychotic...bully...)"

Blaming statements really say:

"I am angry and I'd rather 'get' you than do something about myself."

## TRAP 2: PSYCHING-OUT

A favorite is what I have labeled "psyching-out". As women much of our role conditioning has pushed us into dealing with emotional and motivational material of others. Some of this was necessary background in order to better fulfill our roles and we all needed to become more skilled in recent years because competition was getting stiffer.

Some of learning this, however, related to our own survival in a different way. It was a way, since we had less power, of knowing where the "boss" was at, so we could work around him.

Whatever the original reasons were, the result was that as a group, we women became outstandingly accurate in psyching-out. We have been trained and trained ourselves to recognize a defense, a complex, an unresolved childhood issue, an unacknowledged emotion and an ulterior motive with almost split-second timing while we simultaneously stir the soup-pot and hand out kleenex to the kids.

One thing which is interesting is how much a woman's skill this has become. Men use the communication pattern but

usually without the skill. Women use the communication pattern with enough deadly accuracy to delight a researcher looking for statistical significance.

Well, if we're so good at psyching-out, what's wrong with it? Absolutely nothing, if you are content with your focus being the other person and if you want to function as an "in-house" therapist so the other person doesn't have to wonder about his/her own feelings and behavior.

However, as a method to use when your goal is assertive behavior in order to be responsible for yourself, it doesn't help much.

Psyching out is really saying one of two things:

"If I can understand what your "inside space" is like, then maybe I can stand you and you don't have to change your behavior."

OR

"If I can help you understand your "inside space" then maybe you will see how wrong/confused/immature it is and correct that and then your behavior will change."

The first statement is a clear giving up of our rights. No matter what may be motivating people, there are limits on what they may do.

The second statement is equally confused. We have no right to ask anyone else to deny their "inner-space" or to change what they think or feel, even if we don't like it. What we do have a right to talk about with them is behavior.



It really doesn't matter to me what is motivating a person to scream at me and call me names. I don't like being treated that way and the person either stops the behavior or I won't continue the contact. Once it stops, then I can decide what I want to do next but the first step is to be clear that either s/he stops directing that behavior at me or I will remove myself so it cannot be directed at me.

Both Trap 1 and Trap 2 move too far on the continuum into aggressiveness which is an angry position. Trap 3, on the other hand, doesn't move far enough. It stays in non-assertive behavior.

### TRAP 3: WITHDRAWAL

"Bite your lip"

"Count to ten"

"Smile and shrug it off"

"That's the way husbands (men, children, parents, bosses) are."

We've all had a lot of training in withdrawing. Female conditioning has been especially strong here. Little boys fight back but not little girls. Little boys are strong and can take care of themselves out there but little girls need to be sweet and pretty in order to get by. Little boys get what they want by being direct but little girls are taught to be indirect.

"Pull back and come at it another way. Try sweet talk. Use your body to turn him on. Be helpless and appeal to his manliness. Do anything but don't confront directly."

What's interesting about withdrawing, however, is that we frequently know our rights have been infringed upon and we've been treated unfairly. That makes us angry. Since we've withdrawn and are into indirectness, however, we then become indirectly angry. We may turn it inward and get sick or depressed or we may direct it out and forget to schedule meetings or lose files or burn eggs. But we generally do something with the anger.

What is wrong here, of course, is that what we end up doing with the anger is inappropriate in changing anything. If we turn it in, we're directing it at the wrong person and if we let it out indirectly at the right person, it doesn't change what needs to be changed.

#### TRAP 4: CREATING STATIC

Although this is another form of withdrawal, creating static is much more active. It's non-verbally active. Instead of saying no, we say yes and then begin to mess things up and make life so impossible that the other person frequently resorts to: "Oh, never mind" or "Here, let me do it." What we are really saying is:

"I don't have the right to say no so I'll maneuver you into saying no for me. You have more rights/strength/power than I do."

Now that we're fairly clear about what we need to avoid, what is it that we do to be assertive in this type of situation? Since we have already determined that what people think, want, feel, etc. is private territory, we have narrowed down the type of situation we're focusing on to four positions another person could take which would infringe on our rights and need to be responded to assertively.

Person A could:	say something	Verbal
	not say something	
	do something	Behavioral
	not do something	

Even within those limits, that leaves an infinite number of possibilities. How can we respond assertively? The response follows the following general pattern:

I do not like it...	(self statement)
When you...	(description)
I want...	(self statement describing verbal/ behavioral change)

When you make an assertive statement you are affirming your rights, describing the other's infringing behavior, and setting limits within the relationship.

It is this issue of new or different limits which we need to be very clear about. If a transaction is occurring which infringes on our rights, it is a transaction which has unequal limits. We are more limited and the other person is ending up with rights plus privileges. It is privileges at the expense

of our rights which must be changed. This is a difficult area for women. Because of the difference in male/female conditioning, both men and women have become confused and act as if many male privileges are really their rights. And, if we as women don't sort this out, I'm afraid no one will. It doesn't seem too likely that the average human-man is going to have much energy to volunteer away his existing privileges.

One final word about interacting assertively. Once women learn how to behave assertively in interactions with other people, they report that they experience much less fear and much less anger. That makes sense if we remember the continuum we were talking about earlier, since the aggressive position is an angry stance, the non-assertive position is a fear stance and the assertive position is a self-confident stance. And that is simply one more thing to know until we can experience it enough to believe it.

1

## SESSION III: AGENDA

1. Setting a focus and making contact  
"What's been happening re: assertiveness?"
2. Review of "communication traps"  
Questions and discussion
3. Focused Exercise: Identifying Response Patterns  
Sub-divide into groups of three women
4. Discuss and process exercise in total group
5. Role play situations with modeling, feedback  
and repractice
6. Session evaluation



TRAPSI CAN STOP YOU IF I

BLAME

\*

attack

PSYCH OUT

=

change the subject

WITHDRAW

=

punish you

CREATE STATIC

=

manipulate you

FOCUSED EXERCISEIDENTIFYING RESPONSE PATTERNS

Directions: The following examples include a situation, the position of the woman involved and her chosen response. Read the example and then identify the type of communication involved.

Blaming  
 Psyching-out  
 Withdrawal  
 Creating static

Identify what you would assume to be her feelings in that situation and what her response would create, emotionally, in the other person.

Then develop an alternative response which she could use in that situation which would be assertive.

+++++

Situation: Terry is verbally dominating the meeting.

Carol's Position: Has things to say and wants her/him to talk less.

Response: "Terry, you are really a compulsive talker and quite insensitive to the fact that other people here would like to say some things too."

Type of Communication \_\_\_\_\_

Assumed Emotions \_\_\_\_\_

Assumed Emotional  
 Reaction of Terry \_\_\_\_\_

Alternative Assertive Response:

+++++

+++++

Situation: Another meeting. Each time Carol has had an idea and expressed it, Terry has immediately come in with something different and taken the group attention away from Carol.

Carol's Position: She wants Terry to stop doing this.

Response: "You know, Terry, you really have incredibly strong needs for attention. It must be really hard to be so insecure."

Type of Communication \_\_\_\_\_

Assumed Emotions \_\_\_\_\_

Assumed Emotional  
Reaction of Terry \_\_\_\_\_

Alternative Assertive Response:

+++++

Situation: This is the third phone call, inviting Carol out to dinner and a movie. The previous two times s/he called, Carol said she was busy.

Carol's Position: She is not interested in a social relationship.

Response: "You know, I am getting so overworked at the office that I just don't have time for anything these days. It's really depressing. Today I just found out that I have to have a proposal written by next Monday."

Type of Communication \_\_\_\_\_

Assumed Emotions \_\_\_\_\_

Assumed Emotional  
Reaction of Staff \_\_\_\_\_

Alternative Assertive Response:

+++++

+++++

Situation: It has just dawned on Carol that for the new project the staff is involved with, she has been doing all the time-consuming, boring but necessary detailed work and that the other staff is involved solely with the creative part of the project.

Carol's Position: She wants to share equally in the detailed and creative aspects of the project.

Response: "Well, I may be slow, but I've finally gotten there. You are a bunch of Male Chavinist Pigs!"

Type of Communication \_\_\_\_\_

Assumed Emotions \_\_\_\_\_

Assumed Emotional  
Reaction of Staff \_\_\_\_\_

Alternative Assertive Response:

+++++

## APPENDIX C

## RECORDER OBSERVATION SCALE



Session # Observation #	SPOKE IN GROUP	TASK CONTENT	MAINTENANCE CONTENT	PARTICIPANT
A		Lack/Eye contact		
		Hard to hear		
		Inappropriate laughter		
		Hesitant manner		
B		Lack/eye contact		
		Hard to hear		
		Inappropriate laughter		
		Hesitant manner		
C		Lack/eye contact		
		Hard to hear		
		Inappropriate laughter		
		Hesitant manner		
D		Lack/Eye contact		
		Hard to hear		
		Inappropriate laughter		
		Hesitant manner		
E		Lack/Eye contact		
		Hard to hear		
		Inappropriate laughter		
		Hesitant manner		
F		Lack/Eye contact		
		Hard to hear		
		Inappropriate laughter		
		Hesitant manner		
G		Lack/Eye contact		
		Hard to hear		
		Inappropriate laughter		
		Hesitant manner		
H		Lack/eye contact		
		Hard to hear		
		Inappropriate laughter		
		Hesitant manner		
I		Lack/eye contact		
		Hard to hear		
		Inappropriate laughter		
		Hesitant manner		

## APPENDIX D

## CHECKLIST FOR FEEDBACK

## CHECKLIST FOR FEEDBACK

### NON-VERBAL

#### EYE CONTACT

- \_\_\_\_\_ looking down
- \_\_\_\_\_ avoiding or shifting of focus

#### VOICE TONE

- \_\_\_\_\_ unsure, hesitant
- \_\_\_\_\_ quiet, hard to hear
- \_\_\_\_\_ too high pitched, cracking
- \_\_\_\_\_ too fast, nervous sounding
- \_\_\_\_\_ pleading, little girl
- \_\_\_\_\_ sexually inviting

#### LAUGHTER & SMILING: FACIAL EXPRESSION

- \_\_\_\_\_ excessive laughing or smiling
- \_\_\_\_\_ inappropriately timed laughing and smiling
- \_\_\_\_\_ facial expression didn't match words/message

#### BODY LANGUAGE

- \_\_\_\_\_ nervous: excessive or inappropriate movement
- \_\_\_\_\_ passive: tilted head, moving away

### VERBAL

- \_\_\_\_\_ explaining: excessive and/or inappropriate
- \_\_\_\_\_ overselling
- \_\_\_\_\_ muddy the waters: indirectness
- \_\_\_\_\_ watering it down: use of "sort of, kind of, I guess"
- \_\_\_\_\_ apologizing
- \_\_\_\_\_ eliciting sympathy
- \_\_\_\_\_ making a joke: inappropriate use of humor
- \_\_\_\_\_ blaming
- \_\_\_\_\_ psyching-out
- \_\_\_\_\_ withdrawing
- \_\_\_\_\_ creating static

## APPENDIX E

### POST SESSION EVALUATION





7. In thinking about your "back home" life for the next week, identify a situation where you would like to function assertively. Describe that situation: with whom? what is the circumstance or issue? what outcome would you like? what do you plan to do?

## APPENDIX F

## JOURNAL FORMAT

DURING THE WEEK RECORD KEEPING

1. Describe what's happening on your: "I hope to...I plan to...  
I'm sure I will..." list from last Monday night.

DURING THE WEEK RECORD KEEPING

2. In thinking about your planned assertion from last Monday, describe what happened: (What did you do, what were the results, would you do it that way again,: if not, what would you change, how do you feel about your handling of this situation.)

Add to during the week as (if) further developments occur.

DURING THE WEEK RECORD KEEPING

3. On an on-going basis during the week, identify situations you are involved in where you think assertiveness would or might have been an appropriate response on your part. Include in your thinking both situations where you behaved assertively as well as situations where you did not. Describe those incidents (with whom, relationship to you, circumstances or issue, what led up to event, what s/he/they did, what you did, what resulted, how did you feel, what do you wish you'd done differently)?



DURING THE WEEK RECORD KEEPING

4. Frequently, as one person's behavior changes, others who have been in relationship with that person react (either positively or negatively). In thinking about people you are interacting with during this week, describe reactions you have experienced (whose reacting, relationship to you, what did you do or were you doing differently, what was the reaction, how do you feel about it)? Be sure to include reactions of staff within your agency if they occurred.

DURING THE WEEK RECORD KEEPING

5. It would be helpful to know what supports change for you and what blocks change for you. In thinking about this week what (either other people's behavior or your own) supported your change and what blocked your change.

## APPENDIX G

## POST-SESSION INTERVIEW FORM

POST-INTERVIEW

1. I am going to read a series of situations which could occur to any professional woman. I would like you to imagine you are in your current work setting as you respond to these questions. At the end of each situation, I would like you to tell me how you think you would respond. What is your usual or spontaneous response in a situation such as this? (INTERVIEWER: REPEAT INSTRUCTIONS AS NEEDED AFTER READING EACH SITUATION. SUFFICIENT RESPONSE IS EXAMPLE OF WHAT SHE WOULD SAY IF SHE INDICATES VERBALIZATION AS ACTION, e.g., "I'd say something" PROBE "WHAT WOULD YOU SAY?").
  - a. You are working with a group of colleagues on matters that are important for your agency. You have some good ideas to contribute to the discussion. You are repeatedly cut-off by a staff member.
  - b. Someone you work with has been borrowing your things without asking.
  - c. You are being indirectly attacked by someone in your agency.
  - d. You have been unjustly criticized by your boss in a staff meeting.
  - e. You are the only person from your agency attending a regional or national meeting. There are about fifty people in the session you are in. You do not agree with what is happening.

f. You are being asked to take on added responsibilities which you do not want to do.

g. You are being patronized by a male colleague.

h. A colleague is repeatedly initiating social contact with you which you are not interested in.

i. You want a raise or a promotion.

j. You have not had a word of appreciation for any of your work in the past month.

3. Did the assertive training course help you to increase your assertive behavior in either (INTERVIEWER: HELP PERSON CHOOSE ONE IN EACH CATEGORY WHICH HAS BEEN INCREASED MORE THAN THE OTHER. A "NEITHER HAS INCREASED" (NO) ANSWER IS O.K. BUT NOT "BOTH HAVE"):

- |                                                   |    |                        |
|---------------------------------------------------|----|------------------------|
| a. ___ in one to one contact                      | or | ___ in a group         |
| b. ___ with people you know                       | or | ___ with strangers     |
| c. ___ with males                                 | or | ___ with females       |
| d. ___ in personal situations                     | or | ___ in work situations |
| e. ___ with people with equal organizational rank | or |                        |
| ___ with people with lower organizational rank    | or |                        |
| ___ with people with higher organizational rank.  |    |                        |



4. In summary, would you say you see yourself professionally as:

1	2	3	4	5	6
---	---	---	---	---	---

highly assertive not at all assertive

5. How would that have been different before the training?

1	2	3	4	5	6
---	---	---	---	---	---

highly assertive not at all assertive

6. On the first interview, you listed some problem areas for you where you would like to begin working on developing more assertive skills. I am going to read to you what you listed. As I do, I would like you to evaluate your progress on each. Do you feel, for that problem or in that problem area, you are now:

C completely assertive

M more assertive than before but still have work to do

D didn't improve at all

(INTERVIEWER: USE ANSWERS TO QUESTION 6 ON THE FIRST INTERVIEW. MARK SCALE CODE (i.e., C/M/D) next to each answer).

7. Are there areas where you'd like to be or feel you should be less assertive? Please describe (INTERVIEWER: PROBE FOR SPECIFICITY. ASK: "ANYTHING ELSE?" UNTIL RESPONDENT SAYS "NOTHING").

8. Are there situations where you view your behavior as non-assertive but have no desire to change? Please describe.  
(INTERVIEWER: PROBE FOR SPECIFICITY. ASK: "ANYTHING ELSE?" UNTIL RESPONDENT SAYS "NOTHING").

12. Think about what assertive behavior you have tried as a result of this training. What has been the best possible consequence of that behavior for you

...in terms of your own self (your feelings, rewards for you, etc.)

...in terms of other's response to you

13. Think about what assertive behavior you have tried as a result of this training. What has been the worst consequence of that behavior for you

...in terms of your own self (your feelings, etc.)

...in terms of other's response to you

14. Learning assertive behavior is an on-going process. As you think about what you have learned and what you may want to learn now and in the future, I would like to know what concerns you may have. I will read a list of possible concerns. As I read the list, would you tell me for each of the following whether it is Very much a concern (V), Somewhat a concern (S), or Not at all a concern (N).

a. \_\_\_ I may not be able to change.

- b. \_\_\_ I may not like the changes afterwards.
  - c. \_\_\_ I may lose my current support group.
  - d. \_\_\_ I may offend people by being assertive.
  - e. \_\_\_ I may jeopardize a significant relationship.
  - f. \_\_\_ My boss may not be able to handle my assertive behavior.
  - g. \_\_\_ I may lose my job if I act assertively.
  - h. \_\_\_ I may end up being so different no one will want to relate to me.
  - i. \_\_\_ Other (DO YOU HAVE ANY OTHER CONCERNS NOT LISTED ABOVE?)
- 

16. In thinking about any increases in assertive behavior which you have made during this training program, will you rate each of the following in terms of how helpful or supportive to your changing you found them. The scale for rating is:

- 1 Very significant help to me
- 2 Was helpful to me
- 3 Didn't occur or didn't matter to me

- a. \_\_\_ a colleague's encouragement
- b. \_\_\_ a close friend's encouragement
- c. \_\_\_ positive feedback on changes in my behavior
- d. \_\_\_ my own writing or thinking
- e. \_\_\_ the group

17. In thinking about your attempts to increase your assertive behavior, would you think about times you felt blocked by something or someone. Would you rate each of the following according to:

- 1 Very significant block to me
- 2 Was somewhat of a block to me
- 3 Didn't occur or didn't matter to me

- a. \_\_\_ a colleague's reaction
- b. \_\_\_ a close friend's reaction
- c. \_\_\_ negative feedback on changes in my behavior
- d. \_\_\_ my own writing or thinking
- e. \_\_\_ the group

18. What about this training program was most helpful to you?  
(INTERVIEWER: PROBE: WHAT ELSE? UNTIL RESPONSE IS "NOTHING".)
19. What about this training program was not helpful and should be eliminated? (INTERVIEWER: PROBE AS IN # 18.)
20. What should be added to this type of training in the future?  
(INTERVIEWER: PROBE AS IN # 18.)





